

Town of North Stonington, CT
HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, July 8, 2013 at 3:00 p.m
New Town Hall Conference Room

The meeting of the Hewitt Farm Committee was called to order by Nita Kincaid at 3:00 p.m. in the New Town Hall Conference Room with members Ellie Banker, Jack Brown, Dick (Coop) Cooper, Cindy Faucher, Ed Harasimowitz, and Nita Kincaid present. The group welcomed Cindy as our new Alternate member.

1) Approve 06/17/2013 Meeting Minutes

Ed motioned and Jack seconded to approve the 06/17/2013 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried with Cindy abstaining because she had not attended the meeting.

2) Event Application received

Nita distributed an application from the Thames Amateur Astronomical Society to set up telescopes on The Greene for visitors to view the night sky on the evening of Friday, July 12th. The committee reviewed and discussed the application and agreed to approve the application. Nita will contact the applicant Jen Welborn to advise her on parking.

It was noted that the Amphitheater area and The Green should to be mowed before the event. Coop will communicate with First Selectman Mullane to ask if this can be done by the Highway Department.

3) Planning Items: Accomplishments, Incomplete Projects, and Goals

Nita re-distributed copies of "2012 Accomplishments," "Incomplete 2012 Projects," and "2013 Goals," the three lists that had been developed by the committee in January 2013. The group then discussed each item to determine which items were completed and which needed more work by the committee.

The group decided that the "Work Plan" spreadsheet (used by the committee in 2011) should be updated so that it includes tasks that achieve these projects and goals. Ed and Nita will provide the most recent version of the Work Plan that they have in their files, so that the committee can update it.

The group also briefly discussed some items that may not be on the Work Plan list:

- Pursue options for restoring the 1750 Farm House historical fence. Nita offered to contact Historic New England for possible ideas.
- Identify ways to encourage use of Hewitt Farm by more community groups. Inclusion of a reminder about this in the Rec Bulletin might help.
- Determine if the committee wants to develop a small “standard” recognition sign to be displayed somehow on the property in thanks for completion of special projects. Nita offered to provide an example of a small brass plate that might fit this need.
- Explore making electricity available on The Greene.
- Identify any work that can be done at low cost and organize volunteers to handle certain maintenance work at the farm.
- Develop a trail to the Fairgrounds
- Develop a link between the Hewitt Farm page on the town website and a Hewitt Farm page on the North Stonington Bulletin Board, so that we can post pictures and other information about Hewitt Farm activities.

4) Greene Gables resolution

Nita reassured the group that the Board of Selectmen plan to arrange a meeting with the Historical Society to discuss next steps in the Greene Gables resolution.

5) Maintenance of the meadows

The group reviewed and discussed the ongoing maintenance (or lack of it) with the Farm House and Greene Gables meadows.

It was concluded that the Highway Department be contacted to determine if it plans to mow these areas again before fall. If not, Gary Kincaid has volunteered to mow the back (southern end) of the Farm House Meadow, which was not done in the spring. The committee agreed that if Gary were receptive to mowing the entire Farm House Meadow, it would be welcome.

6) Letters to community groups

The group described to Cindy, who was not present during previous Hewitt Farm events, the procedures used for approving and monitoring these events. The group described "lessons" it had learned from these events and why it believes some were more successful than others.

The committee stressed to Cindy that its goal is not to conduct events on Hewitt Farm, but to encourage other organizations to use the farm for this purpose.

7) Dam re-construction

Nita reported that she, Ellie and Cindy had attended the Board of Selectmen's meeting hoping to learn more about the design and timeline of the soon-to-be re-constructed dam. Regretfully, such information was not discussed in any detail. The group will invite First Selectman Mullane to attend the next Hewitt Farm Committee Meeting (July 22nd) to explain the dam re-construction plans.

Cindy spent some time describing to the committee a history of the pond and dam as she remembers it when she was young. Her great Uncle Fred Hewitt owned and operated the dam, and Cindy grew up only a short distance from it.

8) NSGC Discretionary Funds application

Nita reported that the NSGC Discretionary Funds application has been submitted to the Garden Club. Notification of winners and distribution of monetary awards will not be made until the 3rd week in October.

9) Additional Items for discussion

Jack asked if there is a Site Plan showing the location of the 1750 Farm House and Cabin septic systems. Coop and Nita responded that there is probably no such plan, but that Highway Department Foreman Holiday may know where they are. Jack asked if the committee thinks these areas should be fenced or at least marked to prevent vehicles from driving on them. A "No Parking Beyond this Point" sign is already posted at the 1750 Farm House site, but it does not state the reason why.

Ellie raised the question of removing the two small trees that block the view of visitors exiting onto Route 2 from Hewitt Rd. After discussion, Ellie made the motion and the committee approved unanimously the removal of these trees.

10) Public comments and questions

No members of the public were present.

11) Priorities for July 22, 2013 agenda

- Update on above items.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard B. Cooper