

**Town of North Stonington, CT
HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE**

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**Monday, November 16, 2015 at 3:00 p.m.
New Town Hall Conference Room**

The meeting of the Hewitt Farm Committee was called to order by Co-chair Nita Kincaid at 3:05 p.m. in the New Town Hall Conference Room with members Brian Banker, Ellie Banker, Jack Brown, Dick (Coop) Cooper, Nita Kincaid and Ed Harasimowitz present.

Mike Tavares, Environmental Conservation Police Officer for the State of Connecticut, also attended the meeting, arriving at approximately 4:20 p.m.

1) Approve 11/02/2015 Meeting Minutes

Brian motioned and Ed seconded to approve the 11/02/2015 Meeting Minutes as amended. The motion carried.

2) Committee Appointments

Nita stated that the Board of Selectmen appoints members and alternate members of the Hewitt Farm Committee annually. She will write a memo to the selectmen requesting that they re-appoint members Brown, Cooper, Kincaid and Harasimowitz as Members. Ellie Banker has requested to move to an Alternate Member position and Brian Banker has agreed to change to "regular" Member status; these changes will be included in the memo to the BOS. Nita will also request that the vacant position for Alternate Member be advertised on the town's website.

The group discussed the possibility of meeting in the evening instead of at 3:00 p.m. to possibly accommodate a new member. Ed and Coop were opposed to the idea, but agreed to see if this concession is necessary in order to get an Alternate Member.

3) Meeting Dates for 2016

Nita distributed a draft copy of a meeting schedule proposed for 2016. The group reviewed it and concluded that it was appropriate. The Co-chairs signed it and it will be submitted to the Town Clerk for posting.

4) Rental Renewal Notice and Inspection of 1750 Farm House

The group discussed steps involved in the renewal of the 1750 Farm House lease. A letter will be sent to the tenants asking if they want to renew the lease and requesting a date on which the annual inspection of the property can be done. If the tenants' response is in the affirmative, First Selectman Murphy will be invited to join Nita and Ed to conduct the inspection. Following a satisfactory inspection, a one-year lease will be forwarded to the tenants for their signatures.

5) Preparation for 2016 Annual Report and 2016 Goals

Nita distributed a copy of last year's 2014 *Annual Report* and asked the group to be "thinking about" what should be included in the 2015 report and in a write-up of the committee's goals for 2016. She asked each member to imagine two or three things that the committee should accomplish in 2016 so that they can be discussed at the next meeting.

6) Member Updates on Projects & Additional Items for Discussion

Brian noted that firewood is being stacked on Hewitt Farm property behind the restaurant. This led to a discussion of the parking situation at the restaurant and whether vehicles were being parked in the agreed-to location. Members agreed to visit the site individually to view its condition.

The group noted that hay rolls remained on the property for most of the summer and were only recently removed by the hay farmers. This will be discussed when the farmers make their annual report to the committee.

Nita reported that she had been unable to meet with the operators of the horse trailers that use Hewitt Farm to ask them if they are able to park the trailers in the Welcome Sign Parking Area. She hopes to have this meeting prior to our next HFC meeting.

Coop agreed to send the most recent version of "Hewitt Farm Features: Names and Places" to Nita for distribution to the committee via email. He will first attempt to update the map that accompanies the document in order to include it.

Jack requested that the picnic table that was previously located under the pine trees at The Cabin be returned. He has seen a group of pre-school children use the area and believes they would benefit from having the table. Coop will ask the Highway Department to move one of the tables that is on The Green.

Nita reported that she received a letter in the committee's mailbox from the Rotary Club inviting the committee to apply for grant money. Brian suggested a possible use of such money to be the construction of a pavilion over The Pad.

The Community Garden Association will come before the committee at some time in the near future to make their annual report. They have purchased a new deer fence and plan to install it in the spring.

7) Public Comment

Mike Tavares, Environmental Conservation Police Officer for the State of Connecticut, arrived at the meeting at approximately 4:20 p.m. to discuss an issue relating to the control and restraint of dogs on public property. He described an incident that had occurred on Hewitt Farm earlier that day when he and his leashed dog had been confronted by two aggressive dogs that were being walked off-leash by their owner and were not "in control" by the owner.

Officer Tavares informed the committee that while the Connecticut General Statutes do not mandate that dogs be on leashes at all times, a dog's owner or keeper must not allow it to roam on another person's land or on public property if it is not under control. Officer Tavares outlined the many liabilities associated with such a situation.

From Officer Tavares' description of the incident, it was clear to committee members that the dogs in question were not in control as required by the law and that, if possible, the owner should be contacted and informed that such behavior will not be tolerated.

Ed will research Connecticut Laws for future reference by the committee. Coop will contact the dogs' owner(s) to inform them that their dogs may not approach people or animals on the farm unless the dogs are restrained by leash or other means of control.

The committee thanked Officer Tavares for reporting the incident and for explaining Connecticut's leash and dog bite laws. Members invited him to return to a future meeting to discuss all aspects of conservation and environmental law as they pertain to Hewitt Farm.

8) Priorities for December 7, 2015

- Parking area for horse trailers
- Rental Renewal Notice
- 2016 Annual Report and 2016 Goals
- Dog Control

Respectfully submitted, Richard B. Cooper