

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

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, July 11, 2016 at 3:00 p.m.  
New Town Hall Conference Room**

The meeting of the Hewitt Farm Committee was called to order by Co-chair Dick (Coop) Cooper at 3:00 p.m. in the New Town Hall Conference Room with members Brian Banker, Ellie Banker, Jack Brown and Ed Harasimowitz present.

1) Approve 06/20/2016 Meeting Minutes

Brian motioned and Ed seconded to approve the 06/20/2016 Meeting Minutes as amended. The motion carried.

2) North Stonington Garden Club Trail Project

Coop distributed copies of the *Hewitt Farm Event/Project Application* submitted by the North Stonington Garden Club requesting permission to conduct a project at the farm starting in spring 2017. Coop read aloud the written "Preliminary Proposal to Create a Letterbox Trail at Hewitt Farm" that was attached to the application and the group discussed the possibility of approving it based on the information provided.

Ellie offered her knowledge of "letterboxing" and described how it and similar activities operate. With the understanding that more information will be forthcoming as it becomes available, the group unanimously agreed that the Garden Club could proceed with the project.

3) North Stonington Garden Club Discretionary Funds Application

Coop distributed copies of the *North Stonington Garden Club Grant Application* and noted the Program/Project categories listed in Section B of the form. The group agreed that there are or could be projects at the farm that would benefit from such funding. Members then identified and described these projects and their appropriateness with regard to the goals of the grant.

These projects are as follows:

a) Continuation of the Trail Sign Replacement Project - specifically replacement of five temporary trail signs and/or five CART PATH and HORSE CROSSING signs. The signs have already been designed and would be ordered from **Danforth Signs & Carving**.

As in the past, the number of signs purchased would depend on their price and available funding. Volunteers would install them.

b) Construction of a safe and environmentally protective walkway on the approach to and between the two footbridges. This high-traffic walking area is severely worn, causing tree roots to be exposed and soil to continuously erode into the stream. A professionally constructed permanent walkway, possibly of crushed stone, would be built. It would protect the roots yet be environmentally attractive and durable taking into account that the area is prone to seasonal flooding.

c) Purchase and install another high quality **Fossil Graphics** metal, single post in-ground pedestal sign similar to the "Welcome Sign," that illustrates the environmental features of Hewitt Farm. This sign would be mounted at the Route 2 Parking Area stairway or other location appropriate for its "message." The Highway Department would install it.

d) Re-construction of The Weir and clearing of debris from the waterway to provide a safer river crossing for visitors, and more desirable habitat for fish and aquatic life. Using materials already at the site, the weir would be re-built by a professional with large, flat stepping stones so that water flows through the structure while visitors can easily and safely walk over it.

e) Eradicate Poison Ivy and/or other invasive plants identified at selected sites throughout the farm. A professional would be employed to advise on the project, supply and spray the herbicide, and post the required signage.

f) Establish a wildflower meadow in the area known as the "East Slope," (*i.e. that vegetated area along the east side of Hewitt Road between the Handicapped Parking Area and Welcome Sign Parking Area that slopes into the Welcome Sign Meadow*). This would require the professional eradication of existing woody plants (Poison Ivy) and the purchase and planting of wildflower seeds chosen by the Garden Club.

g) Purchase a flag pole or other type of pole at least 25 feet long on which to mount one of the three bat houses donated by The Grange. The pole would be professionally erected on The Green or in the Welcome Sign Meadow with the bat house attached to it.

Ed commented upon conclusion of this discussion that perhaps the committee is trying to create projects simply to obtain funds. It was agreed however that the projects listed above are needed and do meet the stated goals of the Grant Application.

#### 4) Possible Participation in North Stonington Fest in September

A committee member asked Ellie to relate what she knows about the town Fest being planned for September and if the Hewitt Farm Committee is expected to participate. Ellie described what she had heard about the event and following a brief discussion the

group agreed to wait for more information before committing. Coop noted that at a minimum, the committee would gladly host a Hewitt Farm “table” if that was needed.

5) 1750 Farm House Repairs and Septic Area

Coop briefly reviewed events leading up to resolving the mystery of the “wet spot” across the road from the 1750 Farm House. Jack added that the drywell area had been loamed and seeded by the Highway Department, and that the job was probably complete. Ellie asked how the Farm House repair work was progressing and was told that funds remain in the yet-to-be-approved Town Budget. Work is “on hold” until such time as the budget is approved.

Funds to support the demolition of several town-owned buildings are also in that proposed budget and, if approved, the money could be use for the demolition of The Cabin and/or Greene Gables.

6) Eagle Scout Projects

Coop reported that all of the Eagle Scout candidates currently planning projects for Hewitt Farm are traveling or otherwise occupied and probably will not meet again with the committee until a later date.

7) North Stonington Historical Society Progress

The group asked Ellie if she had any information with regard to the Historical Society's action on Greene Gables. Ellie told the committee that the Board of Directors of which she is a member has recessed for the summer and will not meet again until fall. She does not know if the Historical Society's Greene Gables Committee is continuing to meet.

8) Member Updates on Projects & Additional Items for Discussion

Coop reported that the Highway Department has mowed the area above the galleries behind the Bon Appetito Restaurant as requested by the hayfield farmers.

Coop also stated that Administrative Assistant Robin Roohr had received a phone call from a resident asking if a wedding could be performed on Hewitt Farm property. Robin told him she would check with the committee and that someone would call him back with the information. The wedding will not occur until May 2017. Coop will consult with Co-chair Nita Kincaid and follow up. The committee's concern is whether the wedding, if it includes a reception, requires alcoholic beverages, bathroom facilities or electricity.

Jack reported that he and Coop had measured and staked the Hewitt Road Parking Area in preparation for receiving the bollards and rails that Brian is preparing for delivery. Brian, Jack and Ed will meet to install the bollards and rails. Brian will coordinate.

Coop announced that at Jack's request he had removed the bucket from behind the corncrib. It was full of gravel, possibly remaining from work at the dam. Coop will use the gravel at the footbridges.

Coop also reported that two college-age men had approached him stating that they spend a lot of time at Hewitt Farm and had seen the 'HELP' signs posted throughout farm. They asked Coop if they could take it upon themselves to rebuild the stonewall in the Canoe & Kayak Launch area, continuing all the way along the river to the area of "Jack's Oak." They stated they would clear only enough brush and vines to gain access to the wall. No addition stones will be introduced.

Coop told the men, "Go ahead," and that he would inform the Hewitt Farm Committee of their offer. Committee members enthusiastically accepted the offer and directed Coop to express their appreciation to the men (and any other volunteers that might join in). Coop will be responsible for removing the piles of debris that are generated.

During the discussion on projects for the Garden Club Discretionary Funds, Ed suggested the installation of BBQ charcoal grills on poles such as are found in many state, municipal and commercial parks. Since the project would not meet the goals stated in the Grant Application, it was not pursued. However, it is a project that could be considered for another time and might be funded another way.

9) Priorities for July 25, 2016

- Application for Garden Club Discretionary Funds
- Hewitt Road Parking Area Improvement
- Rebuilding of Stone Walls by Visitors
- Participation in North Stonington Fest
- Ramifications of FY 2016/2017 Budget Approval

Respectfully submitted, Richard B. Cooper