

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

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**Monday, January 25, 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 Nita Kincaid at 3:08 p.m. in the New Town Hall Conference Room with members Ellie Banker, Brian Banker, Jack Brown, Dick (Coop) Cooper, Nita Kincaid and Ed Harasimowitz present. Farmers Mike Daniels and Ron Lewis arrived at 4:15 p.m. to present their *Hewitt Farm Hayfields 2015 Report*.

1) Approve 01/04/2016 Meeting Minutes

Ellie motioned and Ed seconded to approve the 01/04/2016 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried.

2) Election of Officers

Nita distributed a copy of a letter dated January 6, 2016 from First Selectman Shawn Murphy to the committee. The letter announced the appointment by the Board of Selectmen of Brian Banker, Jack Brown, Dick Cooper, Nita Kincaid and Ed Harasimowitz as Members of the Hewitt Farm Committee; and Ellie Banker as an Alternate Member.

Ellie proposed to the committee that one vote be cast for the re-election of Nita Kincaid and Dick Cooper as co-chairs for the term expiring August 17, 2016. All members of the committee agreed.

3) 2015 Annual Report Including 2016 Goals

Nita distributed a copy of the draft *Hewitt Farm Committee 2015 Annual Report* for review and approval by the group. The report includes five topics of importance to Hewitt Farm, two "open questions" that need to be addressed, and seven priorities to be focused on by the Hewitt Farm Committee during 2016.

The group discussed all components of the draft report and concluded that it should be submitted to the Board of Selectmen as presented,

4) 2016/2017 Budget

Nita distributed a draft of the committee's *Budget Request for Fiscal Year July 1, 2016 thru June 30, 2017*. The group reviewed the document item-by-item and discussed the

content, which shows both past and anticipated revenue from Hewitt Farm as well as expenses incurred by the farm over the past three years.

As part of this discussion, Ed and Nita described what they had found during a follow-up inspection of the 1750 Farm House with contractor, Brian Crandall. Nita and Ed received an estimate for the work required to make the necessary repairs. A primary concern is what will be found once work is begun and areas presently inaccessible are exposed. Nita will request that a second professional examine the structure to provide another opinion on the work needed.

The group agreed that no matter what is found, some work would be required over the next year. To perform this work, the committee agreed to include a request for \$10,000 for Hewitt Farm under "Selectmen Capital" to pay for 1750 Farm House repairs.

The group agreed that the draft budget request is appropriate and should be submitted to the Board of Selectmen.

5) New Information on Greene Gables

Nita distributed a copy of a letter dated January 14, 2016 from Frank Eppinger, President of the North Stonington Historical Society to the North Stonington Board of Selectmen. The letter describes the society's research into Fred Stewart Greene's connection to "Greene Gables" and concludes with a request to the Board of Selectmen that the town support listing "Greene Gables" on the *State Register* as a "Creative Cultural Place."

The Hewitt Farm Committee was not "copied" in the letter, but Frank Eppinger had provided copies of the material addressed to Co-chairs Kincaid and Cooper for information purposes.

6) Wheeler Library Summer Activity

Nita reported that she had communicated back to the Friends of Wheeler Library that the committee looks forward to learning more about any activity the library would like to plan at the Hewitt Farm for the summer months.

7) Replacement of Temporary Trail Signs

Coop distributed three documents: *Inventory of Permanent Trail Signs (2016-01-25)*, *Proposed Trail Sign Order List (2016-01-25)*, and *Proposed Non-Trail Order List (2016-01-25)*, and asked the group to review the documents for the next meeting.

8) Annual Report from the Hayfield Farmers

Mike Daniels and Ron Lewis arrived to the meeting at 4:15 p.m. to present their *Hewitt Farm Hayfields 2015 Report*. This is an annual report to the committee by the hayfield farmers detailing their work during the year and listing their plans for the 2016 crop.

Ron read the report aloud and answered questions from the committee item-by-item. The committee indicated approval of the report and acknowledged the farmers' plans for the coming season. The farmers stated that they were satisfied with the size of the harvest, but noted that the four fields were ready quite different in nature and required individual approaches.

As in past years, the farmers requested that the weeds growing over the gallery field behind the restaurant be better controlled and that the parking of vehicles in the hayfield behind the restaurant cease. Ron suggested that if the parking area were better delineated, the problem might be avoided. Nita pointed out that the committee had included this problem in its 2016 Annual Report to the Board of Selectmen and that it was foremost in the minds of committee members.

The committee brought to the farmers' attention that the hay rolls had been stored on the property most of the summer and that the contract stated that rolls and bales must be removed within a reasonable (working) amount of time. The farmers gave their assurance that the rolls would be removed in the future.

Committee members praised the farmers for the work they have done and are doing, and thanked them for preparing and delivering their report.

9) Member Updates and Additional Items for Discussion

Jack noted that while working "over the wall" at the Stone Table end of The Green, he gets a lot of visitors and people just stopping by to say "Hello."

10) Priorities for February 8, 2016

- Annual Report from Community Garden Association
- Progress on 1750 Farm House Repairs
- Review of Temporary Trail Sign Replacements

Respectfully submitted, Richard B. Cooper