Town of North Stonington, CT
HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 8, 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 3:06 p.m. in the New Town Hall Conference Room with members Brian Banker, Ellie Banker, Jack Brown, Dick (Coop) Cooper, Ed Harasimowitz and Nita Kincaid present. Mary Ann Ricker, representing the Community Garden Association, also attended.

1) Request to Expand the Community Garden

Mary Ann Ricker from the Community Garden Association distributed a written request from the association "to expand the garden to include space for six new plots which the association would prepare and enclose this fall/spring in time for the 2017 gardening season. The request included a plot plan of the garden, as it would appear if the expansion were granted. Mary Ann stated that the six new plots produced by the expansion would allow an increase in the number of gardeners next season.

Nita asked Mary Ann about membership turnover and the ratio of resident to non-resident gardeners. Jack asked if there was a waiting list for new gardeners. Mary Ann said she preferred not to maintain such a list but to simply notify the membership whenever a new plot "opens up." Mary Ann added that one of the association's newer members has indicated an interest in "running" the program. Mary Ann added that some of the association's bylaws were revised and there has been a renewed effort toward enforcement of all rules.

Ellie complimented the association on its operation and the continuous attractive appearance of the garden. Nita praised the association's idea of providing a Food Preservation and Canning Methods Program at the Senior Center, its partnering with the Wheeler Library on projects, and its participation in numerous town events.

Coop motioned and Brian seconded to "approve the request of the North Stonington Community Garden Association to expand the Community Garden to a total of no more than 2,500 square feet; and to support this request to the Board of Selectmen and, if necessary, at a Town Meeting." The motion carried unanimously.

Coop showed photographs of several large tree limbs currently hanging over the shed and Community Garden area. He suggested these limbs be removed before the garden is expanded. Committee members agreed that removal of these limbs is not the responsibility of the Community Garden Association and will be requested by the Hewitt Farm Committee.

2) Approve 07/25/2016 Meeting Minutes

Coop motioned and Brian seconded to approve the 07/25/2016 Meeting Minutes as presented. The motion carried.

3) Revising Event/Project Application Form

Nita distributed a copy of the committee's *Event/Project Application* form and stated that it is not "doing the job" for events or for projects. The group agreed that two different forms are needed because the information required for each activity is unique. For example, the *Event Application* should address "what we will do" vs. "what we will want the applicant to do." The *Project Application* on the other hand will solicit a more detailed description of the project similar to the content we request from the Boy Scouts of America for their Eagle Projects.

Nita asked committee members to review the content of the existing form for revisions to be used in a new *Event Application* and a new *Project Application.*

4) Stone Wall Re-building by Volunteers

Jack reported that he had not recently seen the stonewall re-builders. Coop added that he has seen only occasional activity but that is how they told him they would work.

5) Eagle Scout Projects

Coop reported that he had met with Eagle Scout Candidate Nathan Cherenzia and the two had inspected three sites where footbridges are needed at Hewitt Farm. Nathan will consider what he has seen and meet with the committee at a later date to present his proposal.

Coop added that in talking with Nathan about one of the sites, they realized that because the stream they were discussing has no name, it will be difficult to describe the site on documentation required of the Boy Scout Organization and any permits required from the Town. Coop asked the committee if he could pursue trying to get an official name assigned to the stream. The committee suggested that he contact the selectmen and ask them how to proceed.

6) Participation in North Stonington Fest 2016

Nita asked if there was any type of game or activity that we could offer at Fest 2016 and requested that we not give up on thinking of ideas.

Ellie asked about a light board that she remembered seeing at a similar town function many years ago. Coop said that he and others had built it for one of North Stonington's planning fairs back around 1990 and that it was essentially a large map with buttons and lights used to test - and usually show off - one's knowledge of the town's many physical

assets. Coop added, that regretfully there was not enough time before this year's fest to build such a device.

The committee indicated that they probably would not be participating.

7) Application for North Stonington Garden Club Discretionary Funds

Nita reported that the *Application for North Stonington Garden Club Discretionary Funds* had been completed by Coop and was submitted to the club before the July 31, 2016 deadline.

8) Possibility of Holding other Types of Events at Hewitt Farm

Nita distributed a copy of North Stonington's ordinance prohibiting the "consumption, or possession with intent to consume, any alcoholic liquor within the limits of the public highways, parks, grounds and beaches of the Town of North Stonington." *(Sec. 3-1. (b))* The ordinance, however, contains an amendment that exempts Buon Appetito from this provision. The committee discussed that there might be a possibility to also obtain such an exemption for events at Hewitt Farm in the future.

Ed added that the committee should look into installing charcoal grills on the farm that are similar to those found in many State and municipal parks. Their use could be controlled by permit. Nita cautioned that the grills might suggest to visitors that fires are acceptable at any time, without a permit.

9) Buon Appetito Parking Area

Coop reported that the as-built Site Plan for the Buon Appetito parking area has not yet been filed with the Town Clerk and is therefore unavailable for review. The group recognizes that it may not be able to act on the alleged parking violations until such plan is filed.

10) Ramifications of FY 2016/2017 Budget Approval

Nita briefed the group on the Line Item values that remain in the currently proposed FY 2016/2017 Budget and suggested how their retention or removal would affect Hewitt Farm.

11) Member Updates on Projects & Additional Items for Discussion

Jack noted that Coop had placed one of the parking area logs part way down the trail leading in from the Hewitt Road Parking Area and that it was interfering with passage for horse carts. Coop stated that he would remove it.

Nita reported that the Welcome Sign Parking Area appears to be getting smaller due to the encroachment of meadow vegetation and that it could be difficult for horse trailers to

turn around in it. Coop stated that he would ask the Highway Department to cut the edges back and that he would move the logs further into the field, if necessary.

Nita stated that she would send a thank you note to the North Stonington Garden Club for their recent $100 annual contribution to Hewitt Farm. The Hewitt Farm Account now stands at approximately $2,800.

Jack showed photographs of the large oak that is growing in the area he is currently clearing. He estimates the tree to be well over 100 years old and has brought its existence to Bill Ricker's attention. Bill is conducting a survey of North Stonington's prominent trees for the Conservation Commission.

12) Priorities for August 22, 2016

- Review Buon Appetito Parking Lot Site Plan
- Review Revised Event and Project Applications
- Progress of the FY 2016/2017 Budget Approval
- Procedure for Expansion of the Community Garden
- Naming a Tributary of the Shunock River

Respectfully submitted, Richard B. Cooper