

Town of North Stonington, CT
HEWITT FARM COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 22, 2011 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 3:05 p.m. in the New Town Hall with members Ellie Banker, Jack Brown, Dick (Coop) Cooper, Ed Harasimowitz, Nita Kincaid and Eddie McGowan present.

1. Approve 08/01/11 and 08/08/11 Minutes

Eddie motioned and Ellie seconded to approve the 08/01/11 Minutes.

Ellie motioned and Eddie seconded to approve the 08/08/11 Minutes with the following change: Eddie should be shown to be the co-lead with Nita in developing a plan to establish a Friends of Hewitt Farm organization.

2. Member updates on projects and any items for group discussion

Nita explained the new format of the Agenda, which allows each member to give his/her project report and to discuss any topics of interest prior to reviewing group issues like the Work Plan.

a. Jack (Entrance)

Jack began by presenting his plan for dam reconstruction. He distributed his paper *Hewitt Farm Committee Input to the Dam Reconstruction Project* and asked the group to read it for comment at the next meeting.

Jack described his working on the Tree-of-Heaven as well as a larger scale clean-up project in the entrance area. He had cut a short swath through the underbrush from the Amphitheater area to the Shunock River as a demonstration of what the stone wall would look like if it was completely cleared.

Jack and Nita will meet with Jim Tillinghast of the Highway Department on Friday August 26th to cut Tree to Heaven in the area of the Visitor Entrance. Other members are encouraged to join but as a work party only. Committee business may not be discussed. The time of this meeting will be determined and communicated by Nita.

On Saturday, Nita will meet with two possible volunteers who may assist in cutting the larger Tree-of-Heaven and hauling it away from the site. Members are also encouraged to attend this meeting but again Committee business may not be discussed. The time of this meeting also will be determined and communicated by Nita.

Jack stated perhaps at this same time other trees he had marked should also be cut. After discussion, the committee agreed that at this point the committee should concentrate on cutting the Tree-of-Heaven. The cutting of other trees should be left until after a determination of which trees require approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission before they can be removed (per the North Stonington *Ordinance Concerning the Designation of Scenic Roads*). The group agreed, however, that "Jack's trees" should remain marked. Jack requested that other members familiarize themselves with what had been marked, noting there was Autumn Olive and Choke Cherry, etc.

Nita summarized that the committee would "stick to its original schedule" with regard to what vegetation would be cut and when. The committee would see what can be done Friday and then will decide whether to proceed with this work on Saturday.

b. Eddie (Signs, Facebook)

Eddie reported that he was continuing to work on a Facebook page and thought the committee should have an email address to receive communication from the public. Coop said he would like to work with him.

Eddie also reported great progress with the entrance sign. The committee has received a quote from a supplier for the desired style and the quote was given to Nita for use in writing the grant request. At this time, this was the purpose of obtaining the quote. Final design of the sign and selection of a vendor will occur this winter.

c. Ellie (Greene Gables history)

Ellie stated that she had not been able to reach Marc Tardiff about his 8th Grade History Sign Project but would probably have better success once school re-started.

She also had not had the opportunity to research Greene Gables at the Town Hall or to return to the Historical Society to search for photos.

d. Coop (Names & Terminology, Eagle Scout project, letters)

Coop reported that he had not heard from Eagle Scout Candidate, Tom Kane, about the Footbridge Project, but had decided not to "bug" him.

Coop distributed the most recent copy of *Names and Terminology* and it was suggested by Jack to remove reference to a camping area. All agreed! It will be removed.

Coop stated that Ellie had given him a draft of a letter that could be sent to previous "Hewitt Farm Property Committee" members, but that he had not yet had a chance to review it.

Coop also noted that Maggie Jones from the Pequotsepos Nature Center will be leading a walk of the Bicentennial Trail for the Wheeler Library. This will occur on Saturday, September 10th. Coop suggested we have everything looking "ship shape" for the occasion.

e. Ed (Meeting with Building Officials)

Nita began by describing how she and Ed had met with North Stonington's Building Official Lou DiCesare to request that he inspect Greene Gables to see if he can determine what it would involve to return the building to a usable condition.

Ed explained that Lou said there were very different requirements for renovation depending on how the building was going to be used, and that its use must be determined before a cost estimate can be made.

Lou proposed that he and Building Official Wayne Greene inspect the building in light of what it could be used for from an architectural and building code standpoint. They will write a brief report and possibly meet with the committee.

f. Nita (NS Garden Club application, "Open Property Day, 501(c)(3) outline)

Nita had previously (via email) distributed a work-up she had done for the grant application to the North Stonington Garden Club. She briefly reviewed it and asked if there were any comments. Receiving only a few editorial comments, she then asked the group for some words to include in ". . . why you think this project is important." Ellie suggested emphasizing that because this is the entranceway, it is essential that it make a "good first impression."

The group appeared comfortable with the application and all agreed that Nita should submit it.

Nita next distributed an outline for planning Open Property Day titled *Celebrate Fall at the Hewitt Farm*. The outline proposed holding the celebration on Saturday, October 22nd, with a Rain Date of Sunday, October 23rd. The goal is simply "HAVE A FUN DAY FOR ALL: Introduce the property to residents, gain supporters and volunteers." The committee agreed!

Nita reported that the Lions Club had already agreed to be present. Following a brief discussion on inviting logical groups to participate in the event, Nita asked specific committee members to contact the following groups or individuals:

- Lions Club Food Booth - **Nita (the club accepted)**
- 2-3 Horse owners/groups - **Nita**
- Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts - **Nita**
- Tractor exhibitor/demonstrator -**Nita**
- DEEP or CIPWG - **Nita**
- UConn/Trout Unlimited - **Jack**
- Local land conservancies and Garden Club - **Nita**
- PTO - **Nita**
- NS Historical Society - **Ellie**
- Wheeler Library - **Nita**
- NS Recreation Commission - _____
- NS Educational Foundation - _____
- NS Business Association – **Nita**
- Music provider or providers - **Eddie**
- NS Fire Department – **Eddie**
- Cemetery Committee - _____

Committee members were asked to suggest possible types of activities such as wagon rides, games, organized trail walks, and music. Setting up a few areas for fishing (Jack) and organizing a Horseshoe Tournament or Volleyball (Eddie) were mentioned. Ed noted that we will need a "Parking Dept." and cautioned about the entrance width for large vehicles like trailers.

Nita said she would accept responsibility for publicity. Using radio (Cool 101) was suggested.

It was decided that the Open Property Day "team" will meet for a workshop on Tuesday September 6th at 3:00 p.m. in the New Town Hall to continue to plan and work on Open Property Day activities.

Nita stated that her research indicates a "friends" organization, that operates as part of a municipality, may receive Federal tax-deductible contributions from donors, and that it may not be necessary for a Friends of Hewitt Farm group to obtain 501(c)(3) status. This will be discussed further with the Selectman's Office.

3. Continue Review of Hewitt Farm Work Plan

The group agreed there was NOT sufficient time to continue the review of the *Work Plan*. The review will continue at the next regular meeting on September 12th.

4. Public Comments & Questions

No members of the public were present.

5. Identify items for 09/12/11 Agenda

- **Jack** and **Nita** – status of entrance clearing
- **Ellie** - search for Greene Gables photos and historical information. **Coop** will assist her by also researching information.
- **Eddie** - draft of Facebook page "advertising" Hewitt Farm and introducing the Hewitt Farm Committee, and establishment of an email address for the public to use to contact the committee.
- **Ed** - contact with Lou DiCesare and Wayne Greene re: their Greene Gables inspection and report.
- **Nita** - plan to establish a "Friends of Hewitt Farm" organization.
- **Nita** - grant application submission to the North Stonington Garden Club.
- **Nita** - identification of participants for Open Property Day. (**Other** committee members also making contacts.)
- **Coop** - Work on the *Plan for the Operation and Maintenance of Hewitt Farm* and related documentation.
- **The Open Property Day "team"** will meet for a September 6th workshop.

The next regular meeting will be held on **Monday, September 12, 2011 at 3:00 p.m. in the New Town Hall Conference Room.**

Eddie motioned and Jack seconded to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Richard B. Cooper