

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

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**Monday, January 09, 2017 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 3:09 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. Resident Pat Lewis was also in attendance to address the committee. Mike Daniels and Ron Lewis, the local farmers who lease the hayfields, arrived at 4:15 p.m. to deliver their annual report.

1) Approve 12/19/2016 Meeting Minutes

In reviewing the minutes for approval, Ellie asked what Gill Bliss and Gene Anderson had proposed to do to stabilize basement beams in the 1750 Farm House. Nita and Ed described the contractors' thorough inspection and the steps suggested by them. Ellie also inquired whether we should request a proposal from Brian Crandall, who had looked at the beams a year ago. Nita indicated that Brian had been very knowledgeable and helpful, but another review was not necessary.

Ellie motioned and Ed seconded to approve the 12/19/2016 Meeting Minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

2) Audience Comments

Pat Lewis stated that she had come to discuss the idea of encouraging cross-country skiing on Hewitt Farm. She said that the relatively level terrain in certain areas of Hewitt Farm probably would make it ideal for cross-country ski trails and that if trails were laid out, a group like the Boy Scouts might be able to build and groom them. The committee responded that such skiing is already permitted, but we have seldom seen anyone using the farm for this activity. Pat explained that grooming (flattening the snow) would make usage more likely and that would require investment in an appropriate machine.

She also mentioned that a building like the Cabin could possibly be used as a small center for winter activities where folks could stop for hot chocolate and to get warm. The committee informed Pat that both empty buildings, the Cabin and Green Gables, were in poor condition and neither could be converted to this use without significant expense.

The group thanked Pat for her suggestions and told her that it would include cross-country skiing when promoting recreation activities at Hewitt Farm. The group agreed that the town's Recreation Committee should be contacted to remind them of Hewitt Farm opportunities such as cross-country skiing.

3) Pros and Cons of Demolishing the Cabin and/or Greene Gables

Nita distributed a matrix, which listed samples of pros and cons for saving the Cabin and Green Gables vs. demolishing them. The document also contained a brief description of the two structures.

Coop followed-up by distributing a copy of *Pros and Cons for Saving Hewitt Farm's Cabin and Green Gables*. It included a definition of the term "save" to be used in discussions and four individual lists: **(a)** why the Cabin should be saved, **(b)** why the Cabin should not be saved, **(c)** why Greene Gables should be saved, **(d)** and why Greene Gables should not be saved.

After Coop read each of the lists aloud, the group concluded that the individual items needed to be expressed more objectively. Members agreed to review the lists on their own and edit or rewrite the items for discussion at the next meeting.

4) Status of Eagle Scout Projects

Nita reported that she had received an inquiry from Boy Scout Ethan Smith asking if there was a project he could perform at Hewitt Farm in fulfillment of his Eagle Scout requirement. He was particularly interested in a project on the 'Dam Trail' that would involve building a picnic area. Nita replied to him by email explaining the "steps needed for doing a project at Hewitt Farm," and requested that he fill out the committee's *Project Application* form and attend one of its meetings.

5) Annual Report from the Hayfield Farmers

Hayfield farmers Mike Daniels and Ron Lewis attended the meeting to present their annual report as prescribed in their lease with the Town. They began their presentation by distributing their report entitled *Hewitt Farm Hayfields 2016 Report* dated December 31, 2016. The document contains eight items, which describe the work that the farmers performed on the farm this past year and identified the individuals and organizations that helped them with this work. The document also contained a list of items that Mike and Ron plan to accomplish during the 2017 crop-year.

Committee members indicated they were extremely pleased with the work done by Mike and Ron this past year, and each expressed their gratitude to the farmers.

6) Priorities for January 23, 2017

- Possible demolition of structures
- Update on Eagle Scout projects
- Installation of new Trail Signs
- Work on the 1750 Farm House

Respectfully submitted, Richard B. Cooper