

**Spring Hill Farm
Advisory Committee
February 19, 2018
Approved Minutes**

Attendance

Present:

Corinna Reishus, Facilitator
Kendall Kunelius
Emily Kunelius
Colin Costine
Maryann Boulter
Maria Oakley
Tiffany Coroka Gillen
Chuck Myette
Joe Krasowski

Absent:

Cass Buckley, Selectmen
Joe Castricone
James Piper

Members of the Public Present at Various Times:

Gary Van Geyte
Derrick Heins, Vets4kids 501(c)(3) NEVAR Project
and persons unknown to the minute taker

1. Call to Order – Open Meeting

Chair Kunelius called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

2. Review of January 15, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Boulter motioned to accept the minutes, amended as follows:

Line 150 “form to from”

Mr. Krasowski seconded her motion. With Colin Costine abstaining due to absence from that meeting, all were in favor, so moved.

3. Meet & Greet Dates and Times

Dates and times for the Meet & Greet were discussed and a possible date and time is Saturday, the 24th of March from 10 am until Noon, at Stevens Hall or the MPR to present their plans and open to the public for ideas, opinions and questions. Mr. Krasowski suggesting having an activity to get the children involved. Chair Kunelius suggested a suggestion box and refreshments. Mr. Myette will bring a projector to show a map and pictures of the property.

4. Review & Revise By-Laws

Mrs. Boulter created a draft of the By-Laws and the content and grammatical changes were made as follows: Section 5, Article 2 Membership has been changed to Section 2, Section 2 is now Section 3 and reads “each committee member shall serve a three-year term with the first appointment being for one, two or three years to provide for staggered term” Section 4 is deleted in its entirety and a new Section 4 has been added which reads “in the event of a vacancy nominations will be accepted and approved by the committee and the committee will make recommendations for the Board of Selectmen for appointment.” Article 4 Officers and Duties, Section 3 is corrected to read Section, subsection b is deleted from subsection 2, Section 4 should be corrected to read Section 3 and Section 3 should read “the Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence.” “In addition the Vice Chair shall take minutes of the meeting in the event a record keeper is not available.”

Chair Kunelius motioned to accept the proposed By-Laws, as amended. Mr. Krasowski seconded her motion, all in favor, so moved.

5. Presentation & Submission of Vision Documents

Chair Kunelius advised that the Board of Selectmen would like to see some project updates and she asked to do a round table of their ideas and goals.

Mrs. Oakley liked the idea of having the Community Garden that Ms. Gillen proposed as well as chickens and livestock on the property.

Mr. Myette stated that he wanted to stay true to Miss Church's desires which included being a working farm with the four concepts listed in the Easement document; the land utilized properly without damage to the property; used by children and adults and open to clubs, events, programs and so forth; as well as providing food to the community and school.

Mr. Krasowski recommended not altering the hay fields in the first year of the project; the greenhouse is an important feature; potential partnership with the Boys or Girl Scouts in renovations and restorations; generators of revenue; maintain the organic aspect so long as it is cost efficient; working potentially with a program at Pinkerton or the other program such as what Candia had to restore the barn; educational opportunities; populating the farm with people to watch over the livestock.

Emily Kunelius would like to see produce, vegetables, meat, fruit, eggs, and possibly unique crops; pigs, chickens and other livestock; selling Christmas trees; timber management; transforming the house or other area into a central education center; maximizing the trails, pond and sledding hill; hosting community events like hayrides and bonfires; a mix of short-term and long-term goals in general.

Mrs. Boulter stated that she would like to see it be a working farm; advocates for occupancy of the farmhouse; grant money for restorations and improvements; community areas and events; giving back

to the town.

Ms. Gillen would like to keep the hay fields going; selling Christmas trees and having fruit producing trees and maple tapping tied in with education; marking, categorizing and naming trails; community gardens; operating greenhouse; field trips; barn sales with percentage of profits; dinner events, bingo, etc.; areas for senior citizens that are wheelchair and walker friendly; and composting class.

Mr. Costine would like to see productive fields and attention to the old barn.

Chair Kunelius stated that the greenhouse is a good topic; education should be secondary at this time to agriculture and maintenance; get established and safe first; potentially hire a farm manager for animals and farming

The Committee as a whole agreed that they should stay within the guidelines of the easement and that even little things can make a giant impact.

6. Establishing Criteria for Decision Making

Mr. Krasowski suggested that a basic outline using the four focus points (farming, forestry, recreation and education) should be proposed to discuss any proposal, vote for a formal proposal, provide the information and recommendation to the Selectmen, then open to questions and voting.

Mr. Myette and Ms. Gillen will work on developing a point system for evaluation potential projects.

7. NEVAR Project

Derrick Heins from Kids4Farms 501(c)(3) spoke about the NEVAR Veteran's farming project. Mr. Heins introduced that his program for Veterans would provide a 12 month agriculture study which includes a year of living and working on a farm followed by a two-year apprenticeship which gives USDA qualifications. The main focus is to assist a diverse group of veterans with career and personal transition. There is no base of revenue.

Mr. Heins plans to have four greenhouses on the property with one for the community; grass-fed livestock and the town would have complete access to the farm.

Chair Kunelius question the safety of children on the farm since the town would not be hiring the workers and volunteers to which Mr. Heins responded that it is a state collegiate program and all veterans would be honorably discharged and have background checks done by them.

Mr. Myette asked how large the grant was. Mr. Heins stated that it was \$960,000 over a three-year period.

Mr. Heins stated that he had research programs with UNH, U-Mass and University of Maine. Mr. Myette asked about housing as well as his experience level and length of time in operation. Mr. Heins said it would not be permanent housing with a firehouse rotation and a farm manager overnight. Mr. Myette attempted to clarify the number of available acres which he believed Mr. Heins had misunderstood. Mr. Heins stated that his organization was founded in 2016 shortly before writing the grant proposal in 2017. Mr. Myette opined that he would like to see some sort of a track record and it

didn't appear that Mr. Heins had any in this area to judge by.

Ms. Gillen asked why Spring Hill Farm and not a larger more established operation. Mr. Heins stated that he looked into purchase of a working farm but an established operation would not teach the veterans basic start up concepts.

Mrs. Oakley expressed concerns about community use of the sledding hills and trails and public accessible. "I don't want to spend the next five years driving past the farm again."

Mr. Krasowski asked if this was an all or nothing project. Mr. Heins stated that it did not have to be.

Chair Kunelius advised that tenants haven't worked out so good for the farm in the past. Mr. Heins stated that these problems were with the town creating self-revenue which was not his plan. Mrs. Reishus asked for clarification on the length of the program. Mr. Heins stated that it would be a one year lease that could be renewed for a five year term so that a warrant article wouldn't be needed for the first year.

Mrs. Reishus asked if the name Spring Hill Farm was published in the grant request by Mr. Heins and whether he had permission from the Town to do so. Mr. Heins stated that they used the farm as a model and that the grant itself is not dependent upon Spring Hill Farm. Mr. Van Geyte stated that he used the name of the farm in his grant proposal and also that he ran a successful business during his term there. Mr. Myette corrected that he used the name of his company.

The Committee advised that they are only an advisory committee and would raise any ideas they stand behind to the BOS but that they were not at that point in this process and Mr. Heins was more than welcome to attend the Meet & Greet.

Mr. Heins stated that if it were to work out he would want long term interaction with this committee and also to install one of its members on his own board.

8. Miscellaneous

Mrs. Reishus informed the Committee that Colin Costine was appointed as an alternate by the BOS on Thursday for two years and must be sworn in. Mr. Myette stated that he himself has been both appointed and sworn in since the last meeting.

Mrs. Reishus stated that they asked finance to add \$500 to the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1st.

Emily Kunelius asked if the cow needed to stay on the farm, who owned it and whether relocating it to another farm might solve the occupancy requirements. Mr. Myette advised that the Trustees needed to get together with the BOS and make a list of property at the farm that is owned by the Trust.

9. Adjournment:

Chair Kunelius motioned to adjourn at 9:20 pm. Mr. Krasowski seconded her motion, all in favor, so moved.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Hoijer,
Recording Secretary