

Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee
February 15, 2021
7:00 PM
Approved Minutes

Present (Remotely):

Beth Sautter, Chair
Corinna Reishus
Chuck Myette
Kristina Snyder
Cindy LeBlanc

Members of the Public Present (Remotely):

Gerald (Buddy) Menard
Alex Bartels

Members absent:

Stephen O. Landau
Maria Oakley
Colin Costine, Alternate
Ted Broadwater, Alternate

I. Call to Order

Chair Sautter called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

II. Approval of minutes – January 18, 2021

Chair Sautter said line 54 should read "1:1 match of \$10,000, totaling \$20,000." Line 118 should read "nesting bobolinks" instead of "nesting birds."

Ms. Reishus moved to accept the minutes as amended. Ms. LeBlanc seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

III. Old Business

A. Barn restoration project update – Trust grant application status

Chair Sautter said the Trust submitted the grant application last week. They should know by the end of April/first of May if the \$10,000 is awarded. She believes the Trust is in a good position to apply for other grants, after this experience.

B. Hay / Cows – continue discussion

Mr. Myette said the Trust met with Mr. Menard and Mr. Bartels to discuss how they can work together to turn the productive fields into revenue for the farm. Due to the pandemic and other inactivity over the last couple of years, and not being able to rent out the farmhouse, very little revenue has come in. The Trust is taking on the responsibility of making sure the fields are hayed in a way that's fair to the town, the Trust, and others who use the farmlands.

Mr. Bartels said they have come to a mutual agreement with the Trust that they are willing to take over more of the haying production in return for being able to graze cows at the farm. They hope to use the fields around the barn primarily since there is water and electricity at the barn, as well as a couple of the outbuildings. Mr. Menard said they want to work together to everyone's mutual benefit. Their main intent is to create a sharing event, creating a long-term relationship, and offering their services and time in return for grazing.

Chair Sautter asked about their plans to rotate the cows. Mr. Bartels said they don't want to impede on the first hay cutting, so it will depend on the weather and haying operations. Once a field is cut, they would move the cows to that field. Mr. Menard said the cows on the farm this year will be yearlings, so they won't need much space. They hope to have field freedom of the fields to the right, left and behind the barn.

Chair Sautter asked if the restoration work being done on the barn will be an encumbrance to the animals. Mr. Myette said the work will take place during the summer, when the animals won't need to be in the barn. Mr. Menard said the cows won't be in the barn at night. They can utilize the lean-to attached to barn with some added gating.

The committee discussed storing the hay in the barn, and Mr. Menard said they will help move out the old hay and move in the new. Chair Sautter said they could sell hay directly from the field if they publish a notice as to when it will be ready. Committee members will be purchasing hay, and they know of others who will. The Trust also has steady customers. Mr. Reishus asked if the Trust's insurance covers the buildings as well as the use of them, and Mr. Myette said it does. The Trust is the leasee of the building itself.

Ms. Snyder said from a conservation perspective, it will be nice to see the fields being used and animals on the farm. Mr. Menard said they hope to hold clinics to bring people to the farm to see and interact with the animals. Ms. Reishus said the Recreation Department is in favor of this service provided to the community. Chair Sautter suggested putting something in writing as to what each party perceives the relationship to be, so at the end of the year they can assess what worked and what didn't, for future planning. Mr. Myette will work with Mr. Bartels and Mr. Menard to create a plan to present to the Board of Selectmen.

IV. New Business

A. Tapping trees at Farm

Mr. Myette said Brian Folsom would like to put 50-60 taps in the trees around the house along the lane, as he has done in the past. He will clear out the brush and open up the path along the stone wall. He generally donates about \$100 a year to the farm. Mr. Menard and Mr. Bartels hope to start a sugar shack at the farm in the future for educational purposes, but not this year. Chair Sautter will contact the Board of Selectmen to let them know it has been approved.

Ms. Snyder moved to approve Brian Folsom's request to tap maple trees on the farm this year. Ms. LeBlanc seconded. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

B. Fall festival – establish date

Ms. Doda asked the committee to establish a date for the fall festival, as the Board of Selectmen would like to piggyback the hazardous waste pickup with the event. Mr. Menard offered to bring a baby cow to the festival. Mr. Myette suggested this year's theme be original old days: old equipment, horse-drawn and farm equipment. Next year's theme could be modern farming, with tractor events, etc. He said the 300th anniversary celebration committee hopes to integrate the fall festival into their activities. The date was set for September 25th.

Chair Sautter moved to set September 25th as the date for the fall festival. Ms. Snyder seconded. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

C. Next meeting – Monday, March 15th

D. Miscellaneous

Mr. Myette asked if anyone knew who plowed a road to the pond and created a parking area. There is a sign prohibiting motorized vehicles. Mr. Menard said whoever did it missed the actual road and plowed through the field. The committee doesn't want to block it off because it looks like they are restricting access. The committee will pay attention to try to find out who is doing it and why.

E. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Reishus didn't receive a report from Finance Director Smith this month. She will make a report at next month's meeting.

Ms. LeBlanc moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 PM. Ms. Reishus seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

*Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary*