

Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee
April 19, 2021
7:00 PM
Approved Minutes

Present (Remotely):

Beth Sautter, Chair
Corinna Reishus
Chuck Myette
Kristina Snyder
Cindy LeBlanc
Maria Oakley
Stephen O. Landau, Selectmen's Liaison

Members absent:

Colin Costine, Alternate
Ted Broadwater, Alternate

I. Call to Order

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

II. Old Business

A. Approval of minutes – March 15, 2021

Ms. Reishus said on line 63, **Hortons** should be **Ortins**. Mr. Myette said on line 87, "...**he** did not ask," should be "...**Mr. Pepper** did not ask."

Ms. Oakley said she listens to the meetings and votes, although she isn't always heard, even if she does not participate otherwise.

Ms. Reishus moved to accept the minutes of the March 15, 2021 meeting as amended. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Ms. Oakley, who abstained. The motion passed.

B. Treasurer's Report

The budget is \$2,250. Expenses were basic heating oil and electrical, which were normal. Alarm monitoring was \$360. Heating oil was \$113.82. Heating oil for the period of 3/9 was \$59.35. Electrical from February 10 through March 12 was \$34.34. The barn electrical was \$16.36. Total expenses for March were \$583.87. Balance on this fund is now \$425.61, which leaves 18.92% of the budget remaining.

There is still \$2,000 in the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee line (100% of the budget remaining).

There was a question regarding alarm monitoring. Mr. Myette said if there is an annual fee, it needs to be included in the budget moving forward. It's too late to

include in the '21-'22 budget. Ms. Reishus will look into it. There will be funds in other lines, since there was no Fall Festival.

Ms. Snyder moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Ms. LeBlanc seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

C. Grant application status

Chairman Sautter reported that the Trust should receive an answer by the end of the month or the first week of May regarding the 1772 Foundation grant.

Mr. Myette said the AARP grant has been submitted. He reviewed Gary Goudreau's evaluation, which breaks the project into four priorities:

1. Parking area and access to the back side of the building via a 30' ramp.
2. Automated door (there are two in the budget, if they are needed). Raising the floor to the level of the floor in the house.
3. Demolition of the current bathroom and widening the opening to 36" for access to the new bathrooms (where the pantry/milk room is now), and a 36" opening to the front family room.
4. Upgrade the electrical with lights at the proper height so they are ADA compliant.

There are two ADA-compliant bathrooms included in the budget, which is the requirement to have 15 people in the building.

The stove and piping in the front parlor need to be removed. The fireplace could be activated. The counter in the center of the kitchen needs to be eliminated, or reduced in size and moved. The septic system functions, and has been pumped out.

Mr. Oleson gave an estimate of \$96,200 for the work. If there are in-kind donations, that figure would be reduced. The grant may sponsor all or part of the project. If it does not sponsor all of the project, there are other sources that could provide donations.

Mr. Myette will speak with the AARP regarding the benefits of this project and what they might fund. He will look at what the Trust could do over time with fundraising, in-kind donations, other grants, etc. He hopes to have a response on the grant by June 1st.

D. Status of cows on farm

Mr. Myette said five calves are onsite in the first field along Wason Road. Mr. Menard and Mr. Bartels are planning to bring in five cows. The cows are becoming an attraction. Visitors can pet them, but cannot feed them.

The area has been fenced off. There are access gates to the back fields. The electrical has been fixed. The cows might be moved after the first hay cutting, when appropriate. Mr. Bartels and Mr. Menard have cleaned up the yards and done repairs

on the property. The road from Wason to the back fields was heavily overgrown. Mr. Menard rented an excavator and cleared the brush, then obtained a permit and burned the brush, so there is now access to the back fields.

All documentation has been reviewed by the attorney and signed. Insurance has been provided.

E. Milkweed research update – Kristina

Ms. Snyder reported that Ms. Ragsdale and Ms. Munson are working with her on this project. She reached out to Alina Harris of the Xerces Society, a biologist for the USDA National Resources Conservation Services who works in pollinator management, and she is very supportive.

Ms. Snyder, Ragsdale and Munson examined a potential site before they met with Ms. Harris. They are growing milkweed seedlings in their homes. Ms. Ragsdale seeded the site with milkweed and other pollinator seed. Ms. Harris will visit the site in June. As long as the plants get enough sunlight and aren't trampled, they should do well.

Ms. Snyder would like people in town to be involved and grow milkweed plants. The next step is to designate the site so the area won't be trampled. The pond and wetlands will make this an attractive place for people to get to know the farm and learn about pollinators. Milkweed plants cannot be transplanted from existing areas due to their deep root systems.

Ms. Snyder believes this is a project that can grow. The Xerces Society said they can apply for a starter kit next season, which includes designated pollinator habitat signs.

Mr. Myette suggested having the soil analyzed. If compost material is needed, there is a large amount at the transfer station. Mr. Menard has a tilt trailer that they might be able to use.

F. Fall Fest Update – Cindy

Ms. LeBlanc will invite the vendors that have participated in the past, as well as vendors from other fairs she has attended. The booth fee will be \$15. The hours will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A few of the vendors might also be at the Town Fair.

She will reach out to demonstrators. People will be invited to bring farm equipment and tractors. Ms. LeBlanc will speak with Mr. Costine about this as well, once the updated COVID regulations come out on May 7th. Mr. Myette suggested hay rides with a tractor pulling the wagon. Ms. LeBlanc suggested having a banner made for the wagon that advertises the farm.

G. Ryan Neal/SHF maple products

Mr. Myette attended the meeting with Mr. Neal, who sold product to Hannaford this year since the places he usually sells were unavailable due to COVID. Even though

136 this was a challenging year, he put out 1,100 taps and obtained 86 gallons from the
138 area in North Chester. Mr. Neal will discuss options for creating special bottles with
the company he works with. He is willing to produce syrup the Committee could buy
at a reduced rate and sell to raise funds.

140 Mr. Neal committed to a 50 half-pint or pint bottle trial run, and will add labels that
142 his design artist will create. He could bottle syrup to be sold at for other events, i.e.
Stevens Hall or the 300th Anniversary celebration, which could be ready before
144 Town Fair or Fall Festival. This initial run will cover what he owes Spring Hill
Farm, so there shouldn't be much cost to the farm. He will use his food license. The
146 cost would be around \$4 each and the bottles could be sold for \$10 each.

148 **H. Wish List Update – Chuck**

Mr. Myette has a list of projects at the farm that could be done by groups. It could be
150 posted on the Facebook page. He will update the list for the next meeting.

III. New Business

152 **A. Action Items**

All action items from the last meeting were completed, except removing the farm
154 equipment from the field.

- 156 1. Ms. Reishus will send the booth registration form to Ms. LeBlanc.
- 158 2. Selectman Landau will speak with Mr. Pepper regarding removal of equipment
from the Wason hay field and Lane Road.
- 160 3. Selectman Landau will bring his equipment to cut the wood in the fields, which
can be bundled and sold for firewood.

B. Next meeting – Monday May 17th, 2021

162 *Ms. LeBlanc moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 PM. Chairman Sautter seconded the*
164 *motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.*

166 Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary