

Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee (SHFAC)
July 17, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.
Approved Minutes

Members present:

Beth Sautter, Chair
Kristina Snyder
Kim Rairdon
Chuck Myette
Joe Biedrzycki
Ann Podlipny
Mark Desiderio
Stephen O. Landau, Board of Selectmen Liaison

Members absent:

Cindy LeBlanc
Colin Costine, Alternate
Ted Broadwater, Alternate

Guests present:

Nick Ortins
Christy Ortins
Chester PACT

I. Call to Order

Chair Sautter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Old Business

A. Attendance

B. Approval of Minutes – June 19, 2023

Ms. Snyder moved to accept the minutes of the June 19, 2023, meeting as written.

Mr. Myette seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Ms.

Rairdon, who abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

C. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Desiderio reported for June, the barn electricity expense was \$17.28 and the house electricity expense was \$18.63. The end-of-year total spend for the Spring Hill Farm fund was \$2,753.77, \$3.77 over budget.

For the Advisory Committee, the tentative end-of-year total spend was \$408, leaving a total of \$1,985. However, there are outstanding receipts that include the purchase of a table and pop-up canopy and stain, and rental of the Porta-Potty.

The total budget for the new fiscal year has been increased to \$4,500.

Ms. Snyder moved to accept the Treasurer's Report for June as read. Ms. Rairdon seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Cattlemen Update

There were no cattlemen present to provide an update.

E. Geary Farms

Nick and Christy Ortins updated the Committee on the status of their goat herd. They have been busy planting, so the goats are being housed offsite. They will bring them back onto the property as soon as possible.

The Ortins presented a proposal to begin a composting operation at Spring Hill Farm, primarily to provide compost for their gardens. They described their plan, which involves charging residents of local communities to pick up their compost twice a month. They have discussed this with the DES and the Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) and received approval. They will begin as soon as they have one customer.

Ms. Podlipny said she has received permission from the Board of Selectmen to begin a pilot composting program in Chester in January 2024. She has spoken with Renewal Compost and will begin marketing this program through a mailing to Chester residents.

The Committee discussed the details of both operations and decided that both could co-exist. Both parties agreed composting is good for the environment and they don't mind the competition, as long as people are composting.

Mr. Myette suggested the Ortins meet with the Board of Selectmen to explain the operation, so they are aware of it.

Ms. Snyder moved to approve Geary Farms composting at Spring Hill Farm. Mr. Biedrzycki seconded the motion. A vote was taken. All were in favor except Mr. Myette, who abstained in his role as Selectman and member of the Trust. The motion passed 7-0-1.

F. Smithsonian Exhibit - Traveling Exhibit

Mr. Myette explained that the Smithsonian has a traveling exhibit on agricultural practices in communities and how they've changed over the past 100 years. They want to bring the exhibit to three towns in New Hampshire and Vermont. The exhibit will be in place for two months at each location. The process will begin in August 2024.

The Committee discussed possible sites for the exhibit, including Spring Hill Farm and Stevens Hall. There are specific requirements for any building that houses the exhibit. The Committee agreed the farmhouse is not ready to house the exhibit.

The application will be submitted by the end of the month. It will take the Smithsonian four to five months to choose the towns that will be granted the opportunity to house the exhibit.

G. SHF Brochure Update

Mr. Biedrzycki shared the final draft of the brochure, reflecting the most recent changes. He is in the process of obtaining quotes for printing. The Committee discussed the number of copies needed to support the locations previously determined to display the brochures. They agreed on a smaller run at first and if they feel it is successful in marketing the farm - i.e., visits to the Facebook page and farm increase - they will print a larger amount.

Mr. Desiderio moved to permit Mr. Biedrzycki to spend up to \$400 on the first printing of the brochure. Ms. Snyder seconded the motion. A vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

H. Site Plan and Septic Inspection for SHF

Mr. Myette reported that the field survey has been completed and a base map is being produced. This will be useful in terms of planning the building, ramp placement, septic system, and ADA compliance issues. Once it is complete, it will be given to Building Inspector Bunker.

The Committee discussed possible locations for a new bathroom that would be ADA compliant, as the current bathroom is not large enough. They also will need to decide on the number of people that will be using the farmhouse, as that will determine the size of septic system needed. They discussed the possibility of having two bathrooms, one of which would be ADA compliant.

Once they have an approved site plan, they can move forward with the septic plan, install the handicapped ramp, and install at least the exterior door.

I. Grant process

Mr. Biedrzycki reported that he has completed the grant application for Eversource's \$10,000 community grant. They will announce the recipients by August 1. He will return to working on the moose plate grant.

The Committee discussed whether they should continue the GrantWatch subscription. Mr. Biedrzycki discussed the publication with Town Administrator Doda, who indicated the Town would be interested in obtaining a multi-user subscription, of which the SHFAC would be one of the users. Mr. Biedrzycki has requested a proposal for this subscription from GrantWatch. The Committee decided to terminate their subscription accordingly.

J. Haying Update

Mr. Myette said they have been working on the haying equipment. Due to the wet weather, they have only been able to hay one field. They have purchased a conditioner, which cuts and squeezes the water out of the hay. They need a three- to four-day window of good weather to continue haying. Some fields will need a week to dry out, once the rains stop.

K. Town Fair - September 9

Chair Sautter has confirmed with Recreation Director Reishus that the SHFAC will have a table at the Town Fair. The Committee discussed prizes and items to sell, including cribbage boards made from wood from the farm. They will discuss shifts for volunteers at the next meeting.

L. Fall Fest - September 23

In Ms. LeBlanc's absence, Chair Sautter said planning for the Fall Fest is moving forward. Ms. Rairdon mentioned speaking with Northwoods Chainsaw Sculptures as a demonstrator. He will donate any sculptures made during the Fest to be sold or given away. The Committee also discussed holding a barn dance at the Festival.

M. Chester Conservation Committee Update

Ms. Snyder updated the Committee on the status of the survey being conducted by Moosewood Ecological on the property, which will continue through the fall.

Ms. Snyder updated the Committee on the August 3 event, "How To Be an Animal Adventurer" with Susie Spikol, which is being coordinated with the Chester Library staff. Ms. Snyder will be doing additional marketing for the event. The presentation is geared toward elementary-aged students, although all are welcome.

III. New Business

A. Any new discussions

Selectman Landau reported the North Chester Ladies' Aid is working to save the building where they meet, which is an old schoolhouse. He asked the Committee to consider if they would be interested in relocating the building to Spring Hill Farm, as Ms. Church was a teacher. Mr. Myette noted the RCCD would need to be consulted as to whether this would be allowed. The Committee discussed alternate locations and solutions to preserve the building, and will discuss this again in the near future.

B. Next meeting – Monday, August 21, 2023

IV. Adjourn

Mr. Biedrzycki moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Rairdon seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary