

MINUTES

Meeting of the Parmelee Farm Steering Committee

Thursday July 7, 2011 - Killingworth Town Hall

The following committee members were in attendance: Christine Cronin, Terry Doyle, Linda Dudek, Doug Ewers, Tim Gannon, Richard Pleines, Peg Scofield.

Absent: Bruce Dodson, Joseph Hutchins, Karen Milano,

Guest: Cathy Iino

Tim Gannon called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and welcomed the guest.

Terry Doyle made a motion that the minutes of June 2, 2011 be accepted, seconded by Richard Pleines, motion carried. Linda Dudek abstained.

Tim Gannon reported on the status of the reconstruction of the schoolhouse. Three iron posts have been placed to mark the proposed location of the building. A new permit must be obtained as the old permit from last fall has expired. There was then a lengthy discussion of the placement of the schoolhouse. Tim Gannon stated that historically schoolhouses were normally placed close to the roadway. This schoolhouse will be located at the intersection of the Old Town Road and the Chester Road. There will be a new opening made in the rock wall which is in front of the schoolhouse.

Tim Gannon then read the two requests for quotes for the work to be done on the schoolhouse (1) for the foundation and the reassembly of the sections of the building (2) for the new roof for the building. There was discussion on the two requests for quotes and the various materials that could be used for the roof. Tim stated that he would make several revisions to the documents and then put the project out for quotes.

Cathy Iino then reported that the Board of Education had sent her a draft of a lease agreement re: the access to the farm. She stated that it requires some revision, but hopefully it will be finalized before the end of August. There was then discussion as to what work will need to be done on the access path from the Middle School parking lot. Terry Doyle explained that Inland Wetlands will need to be contacted, if a culvert has to be installed in the ditch. There was further discussion as to the best way to obtain a drawing of the site.

Cathy Iino also updated the committee on the status of the electric for the farm. Two quotes have been received and the low bidder (an electrician from Deep River) said he could start in a week or so.

Tim Gannon reported that the new sign has been installed at the farm and the old sign will be installed in the community garden.

Terry Doyle is making two signs for the community garden 1. For the Herb Garden and 2. For the Butterfly Garden.

Tim Gannon announced that the Dog Days event will go on as planned. All of the dogs will be from Connecticut shelters.

Tim Gannon announced that the Lions plant sale on Trail Day raised \$125 dollars for the community garden.

Tim Gannon then reported that Tim Forman had informed him that the structural engineer is revising the plans for the pole barn.

Cathy Iino then informed the committee that she had received a document from the STEAP Committee which requires her signature. This gets the process going. There was then discussion of the STEAP Grant.

There was then discussion as to the assembly of a packet of materials to be given to groups who have been approved to hold activities on the farm. This would include a site map and a list of do's and don'ts. Peg Scofield and Linda Dudek will work together on this.

Doug Ewers reported that he had completed his research on Bauer Farm in Madison and Dudley Farm Guilford. Copies of his notes were emailed to committee members today. Bauer Farm is town owned and run through Madison's Park and Rec. Dudley Farm is run by a private foundation. The notes from his research are attached hereto as Schedule A. There was a discussion of the two farms

Tim Gannon announced that there had been a bear sighting near the farm.

Tim Gannon stated that he had started a mowing schedule. He also discussed the equipment that is presently owned by the farm. There was a discussion of the mowing schedule.

Tim Gannon reported that Heather Greenaway had submitted her paperwork for the HIPTAG Grant and that the final payment of 10% will come in, once the final document is submitted. This is the grant that funded Tom Elmore's work on the master plan.

For the next meeting everyone on the committee is to come up with a list of community groups who would have an interest in the farm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Cronin, Secretary

Schedule A

Parmelee Farm Steering Committee
Killingworth, CT

June 7, 2011

Notes on Bauer Park

From a conversation with Bob Cook, a co-founder and Chair of Bauer Park Subcommittee (to the Beach and Recreation Commission) for the first ten years, by Doug Ewers. Subsequent conversation with Scott Erskine, Head of Madison Beach and Recreation Department.

Origin: Bauer Park was donated to the town of Madison in 1990 by the Bauer brothers, who lived at the farm their entire lives. They continued to live there until the last one died in 1996, but programs began before that.

Mission: They do not have an explicit mission statement, but in their will, the brothers stated that their donation was for education, gardens, open space, agriculture and affordable housing. The only recent conflict they have had over purpose and use was about athletic fields, which was alleviated by the town's purchase of the old Griswold airport. Scott noted that it's called a "park," not a "farm." The issue of affordable housing was raised about ten years ago, and was resolved by a decision not to develop it.

Programs: Initially there were community gardens and a woodland trail. (Sound familiar?) Also, they leased acreage to a family for farming strawberries and pumpkins. This lasted about two years. (Problem: no irrigation.) More recently, they established a program for organic gardening, whose plots are intermixed with chemical gardening.

The Beach and Recreation Department formed a subcommittee that developed a plan for use in 1997. They had input from the USDA Soil Conservation Service, which supported a long-term experiment raising chestnut trees from seedlings in different soil conditions, as part of a forestry stewardship program. Also experimented with deer enclosure methods.

Early on they obtained a grant to establish an environmental education program for all grade levels. It was seen as successful but was not continued after the grants ran out. Some classes still use the park actively, at the initiative of the teachers, and some grant money is available from the Bauer trust to support them. This is an attractive concept since the Park abuts one of the schools.

The major annual event is the October harvest festival. It is attended by 2,000 to 5,000 people, mostly but not restricted to Madison residents. It includes music, face painting, horse and tractor hay rides and exhibits by civic groups (Lions, Exchange Club, Rotary).

It is supported by some Beach and Recreation funding, along with donations from the civic groups, the chamber of commerce and local businesses. Planning and organizing this event is a year-long effort and is done by the subcommittee. Its purpose is simply to have a good time by celebrating the harvest. Sometimes they have a small surplus which is used for education programs.

Recently (within the past year) they sought assistance from UConn landscape architecture students to develop use plans. The motivation for this was a sense that they had bits and pieces of it, but no unifying concept or context. The result was four preliminary plans, from which they are picking and choosing. This is still underway.

Governance: It's essentially run by the Beach and Recreation department. They establish sub-committees on an ad-hoc basis for specific purposes, such as developing a master plan. Currently, Scott Erskine said they are developing administrative procedures, something they apparently didn't need before. A current issue is restricting dogs to a dog park, and not allowing them the run of the place, due to a number of irresponsible dog owners who let their pets run through the gardens and don't clean up their messes.

Facilities: they converted a two-car garage into a small classroom. Also a 1860-vintage barn was recently renovated, and is used for storing tractors and hay. They hay the fields every year to keep them open. The farmhouse is vacant and used for storage. They have an historic preservation grant to hire a consultant to identify uses for it, most likely meeting space. Currently it does not have a functioning heating system, and some damage from broken heating pipes.

Funding: through the town budget for field maintenance (about \$10,000-15,000) and the Beach and Recreation budget for utilities (about \$2000) and building maintenance (about \$4500.) The Bauer trust supports civic organizations through grants decided by a board of trustees. The Park competes for these, and does not have a favored status.

Volunteers: They have work parties once per month for a few hours; it's mostly the gardeners, who are compelled by their use agreements. In contrast to Parmelee, they do not have extensive clearing, infrastructure and building needs.

Do differently: basically they started small and experimented along the way. They had champions that made things happen. Apparently they had a contentious period about ten years ago over affordable housing, which some thought was incompatible with the intent and use of the farm; it was not developed.

Some thought that establishing a 501 C-3 nonprofit would allow them to raise funds and secure grants, as well as avoid town politics, but they didn't do it. Being under Beach and Rec creates more conflicts for them than Parmelee experiences.

More information: See www.madisonct.org/bauer/index.htm

Notes on Dudley Farm: Information gathered from their website

Origin: The farm was built in 1844 by Erastus Dudley and operated by the Dudley family until the death of David Dudley in 1991, who gave the farm to the North Guilford Volunteer Fire Company. The Fire Company decided to establish a farm museum to preserve the region's agricultural heritage. They formed the Dudley Foundation, a nonprofit, member supported organization that maintains, through the work of volunteers, the farm as a late 19th century farm museum. So unlike Parmelee and Bauer Farms, it is not town owned, operated or supported.

Activities: Summertime is the busiest season at the Dudley Farm Museum with the farmhouse open for tours, gardening activities and the Farmers' Market in full operation, however the farm does remain active year round. It is a small working farm with livestock appropriate to the late nineteenth century including sheep, chickens and oxen. Activities such as sheep shearing, wool sorting and maple sugaring occur seasonally. Hiking trails connect to Guilford Land Trust trails.

Facilities: The two principal facilities are the farmhouse and the barn. The farmhouse is a museum that demonstrates a typical New England example from about 1900. The Munger Barn was originally constructed in 1890 on the Munger Farm in Madison, CT. It was used continuously until donated to the Dudley Foundation in the mid 1990s when the Munger Lumber Company ceased operation. The barn was dismantled and stored at the Dudley Farm Museum until an old fashioned barn raising brought it to life once again in 2002. Available for weddings, rehearsal dinners, anniversary and birthday parties as well as meetings. Suitable for up to 85 guests, The main floor is unheated, but the lower level is and can seat 49. Wedding rentals start at \$875; hourly rentals are available