

Friends of Goodwin Forest

Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2023 in person and on Google Meeting

Present: in person: President Jim Giana, Beth Bernard, Adam Drouin, Lynne Warren, Gabe Zorabedian, Karen Zimmer, Sue Hudd, and on Google Meet Recording Secretary Linda Wenner, and Lori Brandt. All were reminded to enter their volunteer hours individually now.

The meeting was called to order by Jim at 3:08 PM. The minutes of July 11, 2023 were accepted as presented on the webpage.

Treasurer's Report: Bruce Spaman was absent and the Treasurer's report was tabled.

Social Media: Lynne said she is using Benchmark for emails and 50% were opened with 35% clicking on links. Gabe said latest email went into his spam folder. Top pages are Native Garden, Pollinator Garden. 61 followers on Facebook, 148 on Insta(gram). People liked the Jumping Worm blog post. Lynne would like a bank of articles that she can "dole out" on the blog. Newsletter goes out 10/12 so the deadline is 10/7 to submit material. Beth asked for a series on gardening – putting a garden to bed, winter topics, etc. Motion to accept the report by Beth, second by Linda, so moved.

Membership Report: Jim said with the new office manager at CFPA he is not sure about the breakdown of membership categories in the new format of the report. He will contact Carolyn Lachance for clarification.

Trail Run: 10th anniversary coming up. No report.

Garden Report: Lynne plans to solarize the area with clear plastic, as much as we can afford to purchase. The jumping worms hatch at 50 degrees, so the idea is to get the temperature of the soil up to 104 degrees for 3 days to kill them. If we cover in winter to get them to hatch, then the cold weather will kill them. She also has a plan that would require copper wire. Jim will supply the plastic and wire. Lynne also connected with a landscape professor at UConn who has a class that will work on garden plans for us.

CFPA: Beth said that a new Executive Director may be hired by mid-November.

DEEP News: Lori reported that DEEP has been asked to sign on to a new Federal "Green Ribbons Act" which is an environmental education program for the school curriculum. Windham's Barrows STEM School was recognized last year. If the act passes, schools will receive funding for programs. Although the budget included 15 new full-time maintainers, the funding was not included so DEEP is working on getting the funding. She thanked the Friends for getting the word out that more park staff is needed. Goodwin gets a lot of positive accolades from visitors. DEEP is working on a PSA between them and CFPA. Jim asked about the status of the trail maps for the kiosks. Lori has restarted the process of printing with DAS. The number of maps probably does not include one for the Airline Trail kiosk. The map needs to be updated to include that.

Director's Report: Beth reported that Windham Middle School will be back in October on Tuesdays and Thursdays and they can help with garden projects. Killingly Intermediate is coming next week, twice, for a total of 180 children. Master Naturalist is at the mid-year point. Forestry Day is planned for April 20,

2024, 10 AM to 2 PM, and included in the Great Park Pursuit. Lynne suggested a parade of equipment. The Storybook Trail is close to completion.

Education Report: Adam said there have been good reviews of the programs. The Owl Pellet one was most popular so far. People have asked for more night hikes. The Home School group is going strong. Adam's DEEP contract is seasonal and the Friends would like to fund the gap. Lynne made a motion to have the Friends of Goodwin fund the Naturalist position during the gap, second by Jim, so moved.

Physical Plant: no update. Beth asked Lori if anything had been done on the security system request. Lori said DEEP is currently evaluating each facility's needs and Goodwin is on the list.

Trails: Gabe reported that mowing is wrapping up. Thanks to Linda, Bruce Spaman and Dale May for mowing this season. Gabe and Stan Crawford have been doing brush cutting. Blazed trails have been recently cleared. There will be some final brush cutting this month on a few short sections of the BW trail (NE of Pine Acres) and the BY trail (between Bear Hill and the Airline Trail). Future trail work includes replacing some weathered boards on the foot bridges on the western side of Pine Acres Pond (near the Airline Trail) this fall. Severely rotted boards at this location were replaced in June. Plexiglass covering on Kiosk #9 will be replaced this fall. As humidity starts to wane the rest of the Kiosks will be stained this fall. Staining will also be done on the Governors' Island Lookout and Fran Zumpano Benches. Stain and repair supplies are needed. Emails to trail volunteers will be sent. There is a possibility for collaboration again this fall with ECSU and Andrew May of the Appalachian Mountain Club CT chapter. An ideal project for the students to complete in their 2.5 hour timespan would be a bridge and water diversion channel on the lower RW trail. This would be similar to the project done last fall on the RW near Cedar Swamp. If ECSU can not do this project then the trail crew can do it. Lynne said the work-around trail between the campground and the platform is wet. Gabe will check into that.

5 Year Plan: Lynne said the committee needs to meet with Lori and Chris Martin to discuss the need for a director for Goodwin. The Friends feel that Goodwin should be the center for Forestry for the state just like Hammonasset is shore/marine environment and Sessions Woods is for animals. (Connecticut Forestry Institute at Goodwin Forest?) The 5 year committee feels that the Friends are not sustainable without a DEEP Director at Goodwin. Beth asked if Forestry Department would have more flexibility in staffing due to IRA money that will be coming in? Lori agreed that a sit-down meeting would be best to discuss this.

Socializing: we all agreed we want an event but who will do the work? Jim offered to bring drinks and food. Lynne suggested a pot-luck which would be a more casual plan than the previous event. Beth suggested that Jim make a list of the jobs to be done and we can each sign up for a specific task, not the whole event.

Motion to adjourn by Lynne, second by Gabe and the meeting adjourned at 4:32 PM.

Next meeting is November 14, 2023, from 1 to 2 PM at Goodwin and hybrid on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Wenner.