

Friends of Goodwin Forest

Meeting Minutes of October 24, 2024 at Goodwin

Present: President Lynne Warren, Vice President Lynn Kochiss, Secretary Linda Wenner, Treasurer David Fowler, Steve Broderick, Bill Marshall, Stan Crawford, Kate May, Dale May, Juan A. Sanchez Jr, Jim Giana.

Lynne W. called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

The minutes of 8/22/24 were accepted as published.

No Treasurer's report as CFPA still has not given us a report although they were given 3 weeks' notice.

Goodwin Center: Lynne and Lynn will be meeting with Lori Brant next week. Several hikes were scheduled that did not appear on the Friends calendar and then no one showed up to lead them. We are not getting cooperation from DEEP on programming. Steve reminded us that our state Representative Pat Boyd has asked DEEP several times for endowment information and not heard back.

Non-profit: We are working on the non-profit status and hope to be done by January 1st.

Membership: Lynn reported that we gained one new member from Forestry Day. Current total is 163 with 60% paid. Dave asked when memberships are renewed. Lynn said she will wait until our non-profit status is secured, but probably membership renewal letters will go out in spring. Steve said for the first time in many years he will not be a dual member with CFPA and he intends to write a letter to them explaining why he is not renewing membership. Linda said she would do so as well.

Trails: The Governor's Island platform was water sealed on 10/18/24. Those in attendance were Christopher Crawford, Dave Raczkowski, Bill Marshall, Glen Newcomb and Gabe Zorabedian. There were others that wanted to attend but had prior engagements. Stan Crawford will be water sealing Fran's Memorial Benches. Linda Wenner did a final mowing on 10/20/24 to wrap up trail mowing for the season. No future trail work planned at this time. Trails are in good condition at this time. Gabe will continue to monitor periodically and especially after storms and assemble crews when necessary.

Master Naturalist: Lynne reported that the class is running with Elizabeth Merrow running it. She will send us a bill as an outside contractor. 27 are enrolled plus the father/driver of one of the students. There is already a lot of interest for 2025.

Forestry Day: Lynne explained why the bus expenditure was a last-minute expense. We had partnered with DEEP and CFPA and at the final meeting Tuesday they said they had no drivers for the buses and no funding to hire buses. So the funding fell to us. We have not received a bill from the bus company as of yet. It was a great day with over 100 attendees. Another DEEP snafu resulted in Boy Scouts at the campground where the tree felling demonstration had been planned. It was moved to another location and the Boy Scouts were very enthusiastic at the demonstration. State Senator Jeff Gordon came and presented the 60th Anniversary Citation. Jeff was informed about our issue here with DEEP's policies about building use and also about Last Green Valley's (LGV) interest in coming here and funding improvements. Lynne was told the bus signage, "event parking," at ECSU was hard to find. DEEP's No Child Left Inside (NCLI) did a poor job of promotion as the press release went out a mere 2 days before the event. It seems we are being purposefully blocked because no one wants to take leadership of Goodwin. We are an education center run by the Parks Division in the middle of a forest run by the Forestry Division.

Moving Forward: A Girl Scout leader told Lynne that the scouts really miss the programs at Goodwin as they rely on them for the girls to earn badges. Lynne asked the leader to ask the girls write to DEEP to complain. Lynn said the home schoolers also have been affected. Adam used to do a lot of education programs that they attended. She also noted that the Little Library use has gone down drastically since there is much less traffic here. In order to host programs here, DEEP is now requiring us to get a "Special Use License." There are many kinds which cost a lot of money. For example, to have a food truck at Forestry Day would have cost a \$600 permit fee in addition to food truck costs. Permits now will be required for events such as the Trail Run and Plant Sale. We could not accept membership dues or donations during Forestry Day because DEEP guidelines mandate no money to be exchanged on state property. Ironically, we are trying to raise money to support DEEP at Goodwin and yet DEEP is charging us to raise money for them.

Lynne said partnering with LGV is our best option to revitalize Goodwin. This should be our focus with Commissioner Dykes and Deputy Commissioner Trumbull. The action needs to be taken at the top. LGV has pledged to spend \$100,000.00 to repair and upgrade Goodwin facilities (upgrade internet, install AC, have a welcome center, gift shop, bike rentals, clean the lake and have canoe rentals, etc). Matt Quinn was supposed to send LGV his budget for Goodwin and Lynne sent them ours. We have still not gotten a reply from DEEP to our proposal. "Partnership in the Parks" was announced by the governor and only LGV showed interest. This is a perfect opportunity to create a big success here. If DEEP staff isn't interested, Pat Boyd is willing to propose legislation in the next session.

The committee decided not to fund the naturalist position through the winter.. Dale asked about how programs would be run if LGV comes here. Steve said LGV has one full and one half time educator positions. They already do a lot of programs. LGV's proposal to DEEP was to pay minimal rent on a 100 year lease in exchange for property maintenance and improvements. They would like to eventually build a facility here. Lynne is meeting with Lori next week as Lori couldn't make our meeting today. Representative Boyd told Steve that he will check in regularly with Deputy Commissioner Trumbull and if there is no action by the start of the legislative session, he will propose legislation on our behalf.

Stan offered Hampton Town Hall for our next meeting as it has Zoom capabilities.

Jim asked to be reimbursed for the \$100 he spent on the retirement gift for Terri Peters of CFPA. He will send the receipt to Dave and CFPA will write the check.

Bill asked if we can still do Trails Day if CFPA is no longer sponsoring it. Lynne said Trails Day is a national program so CFPA has no copyright on it and we can promote it on our own. Trail Run can still be done if DEEP is willing to support it.

Our next action will be an e-mail to our members asking that they write to DEEP in support of Goodwin. Steve will draw up a list of talking points and Lynne will send out an e-mail.

Motion to adjourn at 11:35 AM.

Next meeting date and time to be announced, and probably held at Hampton Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Wenner.