

Friends of Goodwin Forest

Meeting Minutes of February 20, 2025 at Goodwin

Present: President Lynne Warren, Vice President Lynn Kochiss, Secretary Linda Wenner, Treasurer David Fowler, Bill Marshall, Stan Crawford, Jim Giana, Gabe Zorabedian, Steve Broderick, CFPA executive director Andy Bicking, CFPA board member Laurie Giannotti, CFPA development director Linda Pierce (on Zoom).

Lynne W. called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

Laurie Giannotti of CFPA introduced herself and said she was glad to meet us. She acknowledged that there had been an accounting error in the financial statement of about \$10,200. She distributed a report with the corrected numbers. It was a coding error and their accountant corrected it.

Laurie asked if Lori Brant had returned our messages. Lynne said there had been no response yet to several emails. Bill said he has not had his questions answered about the regulations and permits that will be required for the Trail Run. Stan said he wants to start lining up sponsorships for the run and Bill needs to get registration started (usually starts Feb. 1st). Steve said the trail run Promotes CFPA as well as Goodwin to folks who don't know about us. Bill said it has become a real community event with Hampton and Chaplin and is quite popular. There are 40 to 50 volunteers and over 200 runners. We draw from Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York too.

In the past Special Use Permits (SUP) were not needed. Now this year he has been told we do need a SUP. It's unknown if DEEP staff will be required. In the past the Naturalist and a Maintainer have been here at no charge. But now we may be charged. Andy said a Trails Day event shouldn't be charged as DEEP sponsors it. However, Shenipsit was charged for an EnCon officer to man one back road crossing. DEEP has changed their requirements for trail runs and road races. Andy asked DEEP about this, and they said they are trying to be more uniform in their enforcement of the requirements. Our only road crossing is a forest one for the 60 people doing the 30K. Bill has submitted the SUP application and expects a response from Margaret within the next two weeks. Still has questions about DEEP staff and EnCon officer. As CFPA is a 501(c)(3), the cost of the permit is reduced significantly. A General Liability Insurance certificate needs to be provided to DEEP and Eastford and Chaplin. Andy will follow up with Lynne. It will take about a month to get the certificate.

Laurie asked if there was any word on the Last Green Valley (LGV) proposal. Our state Representative Pat Boyd will be meeting with Deputy Commissioner Mason Trumbull this week. He is working to keep it at the top of the agenda.

Steve said the question we have is what will be the nature of the Friends relationship with CFPA in light of CFPA not signing the contract for the director position here? We want to fulfill Mr. Goodwin's vision. In the past, when DEEP shuttered Goodwin, CFPA sued DEEP for violating its Goodwin contract. Since then, the director position was shared by CFPA and DEEP. Andy said CFPA fully supports our mission here. At the time the contract was proposed, he was not able to find the staffing. Since then, Beth Merow has been hired to build out the education area. Also, that contract would have required CFPA to do all the maintenance here. Andy met with Mason. Andy proposed a limited schedule and DEEP would not agree to that. Mason wanted full time, so they weren't interested. Andy takes responsibility for that. He has talked to LGV and offered support. Lynn said DEEP told us volunteers would not be teaching here. She was removed as a presenter after 10 years of working here. She was told she would need to get training and apply to be a volunteer. DEEP has locked us out completely. Even our trail

maintenance tools are locked in the DEEP shed, so no trail maintenance can be done. Steve said that everything we built here after 15 years basically fell apart in a matter of weeks when Andy didn't sign the contract. Stan recalled how the Friends volunteers had saved \$9700 when they did the bulkhead repair work instead of a state contractor. We are a very underserved part of the state. Steve said we are dead in the water without CFPA providing a staff person to coordinate activities. Laurie suggested re-opening negotiations with DEEP over the contract. Andy said we should draw up what we want the contract to be. Lynn mentioned that DEEP is adamant that only DEEP can do programs here. Laurie suggested a split position, half CFPA and half Goodwin/DEEP. Steve said when he was here, he was half and half plus 3 seasonal DEEP employees. They got great candidates for those positions because they loved this place even though they got paid peanuts. Andy and Laurie will set up a meeting with DEEP to create a solution so we don't lose this great opportunity with this volunteer base.

Laurie asked about the endowment. No reports have been received from the bank and even Pat Boyd has no response to his requests. Currently the bank fees are higher than the 3% income. The bank is making more money on the trust than we are. DEEP gets the yields. Laurie pointed out that DEEP is violating the intent of the will and trust requirements. Everyone agreed that our partnership with CFPA has worked out very well in the past.

Stan asked what we can do to help CFPA push this along. Steve suggested getting Pat Boyd to help with DEEP. He knows what is happening here and he knows Mason well. Right now Pat is working on getting the LGV proposal moving forward. Steve pointed out the 100-year collaboration between James Goodwin and CFPA. Goodwin hosted the 1928 meeting of CFPA here on the front lawn, and there is a photo displayed here of the event. Andy said Beth is working on hiring an assistant to help expand education opportunities. Andy thanked us for our patience while CFPA has hired staff to get back up to speed.

Trail Run questions still need to be answered. Registration will open March 1st. We may get less revenue if expenses increase this year. DEEP would get a lot of negative publicity if the Trail Run was cancelled or if they don't fulfill their endowment requirements to Goodwin. Andy reminded us of the resources available from Friends of State Parks to help us with our DEEP challenges. Steve thanked Andy and Laurie for coming all the way here to meet with us. Andy said he understands how unique and valuable this place is.

Gabe asked about receiving funds for the Trail Run Registrations. Right now Master Naturalist registrations go directly to CFPA to keep track and then are transferred to the Friends. Lynn said last year Trail Run registrations went through PayPal and were then transferred to CFPA. Bill said we could put Trail Run registrations into our account. We just need an EIN number, which takes 15 minutes on the IRS website to obtain.

The meeting adjourned at 2 PM.

Next meeting date March 6, 1 PM at Goodwin Center.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Wenner.