

## Friends of Goodwin Forest

### Meeting Minutes of January 16, 2025 at Goodwin

**Present:** President Lynne Warren, Vice President Lynn Kochiss, Secretary Linda Wenner, Treasurer David Fowler, Bill Marshall, Stan Crawford, Kate May, Dale May, Jim Giana, Gabe Zorabedian, Emily Logee Savoie, Lori Paradis Brant, Eliza Kimball.

Lynne W. called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

The minutes of 10/24/24 were accepted as corrected.

**Financial Report:** CFPA sent some financial information which shows our checkbook balance at \$45,670.18 as of 12/31/2024. Income for 2024 was reported as direct public support \$3,780.07 and event fee income \$9,206.77 for total revenue of \$12,986.84. Expenditures were reported as event expenses \$4,121.96; dues and subscriptions \$596.96; educational materials \$180.00; contractor expense education \$743.00; travel, meals/mileage \$42.88 for total expenditures of \$5,684.80. Revenue minus expenditures for a net of \$7,302.04. CFPA's report did not include the revenue from the Master Naturalist program (approximately \$10,000.00). Bill stated that the check book balance when he was treasurer was \$54,268.00 at the end of 2022. [Secretary's note: past minutes show the last reported checkbook balance was \$55,110.00 (approx.) on 6/30/2023.]

Lori said the trust has about \$1,000,000 in it and proceeds go to DEEP to run the Goodwin Center. There are actually two trusts: one in James Goodwin's name and one in his wife Genevive's name. The income from James is about \$32,000 and from Genevive about \$25,000. A third trust goes to CFPA for the awarding of forestry scholarships. Three were awarded, two for \$10,000 and one for \$5,000 this past year. Lori said in the future, she will get copies of the trust statements, which she will share with us. She is continuing to work toward hiring staff to run Goodwin. She is a big supporter of Goodwin. The trust funds go toward all the expenses involved in education and staffing.

Lori explained that Parks is split into two divisions: Operations and Education. Operations has the majority of the staff in park supervisors and maintainers. Education has 6 staff. These people support all museums, parks and historic sites, etc. in the state.

A discussion ensued about finding the missing money from CFPA. We have had a good relationship with them since 1964. Their new director, Andy, has not responded to Lynne's written requests. Jim suggested a complaint procedure through the Department of Consumer Protection. It was decided that if Lynne continues to get no response, she will contact the Board. Motion to accept the financial report by Stan, seconded by Jim, motion carried.

**Goodwin Center:** Lori suggested we contact the Friends of State Parks for support and coordination. There have been a lot of staffing changes in Parks with the acting director only being on board for 6 months before being put into the acting director position. Interviews for the permanent position have been held but no one has been hired as yet. A new supervisor of parks has been added to the two existing positions. Eric Gilleau is the new supervisor as of last week. Lori will invite him to come meet us. Matt Quinn has been out on medical leave and is not anticipating a return anytime soon. Marcella Hube is filling in for Matt. She did a walk through recently on the Operations side and said she will work on getting the alarm system installed for the house and museum and that she will have the vestibule door keyed so we can have restroom access. Stan mentioned that Gabe is a property manager if one is needed. Lori will remain our contact for Operations.

Special Use License or SUL: if state is 51% or more of an event, the fee is waived. That 51% can include staff salaries. Margaret Jackson is in charge of SULs. Bill questioned Trail Run contact person as Marcella has not responded. Bill wants to know what are the State's expenses for the Trail Run. Lori asked if there was any traffic control from EnCon officers. No, all are volunteers. In the past we have not needed a SUL as CFPA was in charge of the facility. Now with the State, we might require a SUL. Lori said the most recent audit identified the difference between Friends groups independent from the state or Friends groups supporting the state. Parks wants Friends to be 100% independent, legally separate from the State. Bill is concerned that if we pause the Trail Run this year, it will be very difficult to ever get it restarted. Both CFPA and LGV are options to sponsor us with insurance, volunteers and SUL issues. Registration usually starts February 1<sup>st</sup>. We need to acquire sponsorships and perhaps a food vendor as well. Cooking up hotdogs ourselves or having pizza delivered is another option. We are known for our great trails, low entry fee and great hospitality in the trail running community. Lori said she will set up a meeting with co-workers with the primary focus being Trail Run procedures. Lynn is concerned that any income from the Trail Run will all go to the State for the SUL and paid OT for DEEP staff.

Lori is working to rebuild the environmental education program at Goodwin. Seasonals Molly and Lex are here Wednesday through Sunday and the Open sign is out as it is today. Dinosaur State Park's Mike Ross is assisting them with event preparation and planning. People asked how the public is being notified of these events as they have not been told about them. Lori said a new communications system is being substituted for the listserv mailing list. Lynne said CTPARKS.com has no Goodwin programs listed. This website is hard to navigate as programs can't be found on it. Lori said this new website is not what Parks staff had envisioned and changes will be made. For now, click on "Programs and Events" to find the information. The goal for 2025 is for Education to be making their own pages on the site. There are programs going on here at Goodwin (President's note: You have to find the Goodwin page and follow the link to events from there, but as of Jan 17, no programs could be found for Goodwin).. 7 people showed up for the last event. David said he had seen some announcements in the local Chronicle newspaper.

Partnership in Parks: last week Jeff Shaw was hired as senior advisor for outdoor recreation, and he is tasked with going through the proposals. Because the Last Green Valley was very detailed and complex, it will be some time before that proposal will be implemented, perhaps year(s). An RFP would need to be created and put out to bid. LGV would then apply.

Lynne said the Friends have been disenfranchised from Goodwin and without a partnership with DEEP, we are considering disbanding. She said other Friends groups are feeling the same. Lynne said there is no continuity and the ability to recruit members, and retain enthusiasm is impossible. Lynn K. pointed out that only DEEP staff may lead programs for the public. That means volunteers who used to lead programs for Goodwin can no longer do so. Lynn has spent 10 years as a volunteer program leader for Goodwin. She is no longer eligible to volunteer in this capacity. She is heartbroken that there are so many restrictions that she can not contribute anymore. Stan pointed out that all the trails here are maintained by the Friends. Dale pointed out that even if a director is hired, they won't be able to get much done without an active Friends group. Dale said we are gifted with many talented professionals in the Friends of Goodwin that have many skills and are willing to drive hours to get here to donate their gifts to the public and get people to Goodwin for education. Lori said in the past Operations and Education divisions have not worked collaboratively. But now a new model, a culture shift, is occurring to work together. Bill asked if volunteers need to go through an orientation program or application process to volunteer here. Lori is not sure if each volunteer would need to apply or if the Friends can apply as a

group. There may be a 2 hour class and paperwork to sign. There is no fee, for example a background check fee, since DEEP conducts their own check.

Kate asked Lori what needs to be done to get a director here. Lori said the endowment is not sufficient to fund a full-time position since fringe benefits must also be covered and they are 75% of salary. Income from the trusts are about \$57,000 and estimated cost is \$150,000 (2.5% increase over 5 years). After the CFPA "83 is not enough" campaign, there were 13 new hires, one supervisor and 12 maintainers. There was a discussion about the low return on the trusts and Stan said only 3% of the trust is dispersed and the management fees are much higher than that. We agreed it would be good to find out who the trustees of the Goodwin trust really are. Stan suggested that we think outside the box on raising funds such as renting out the Goodwin apartment to a State Trooper or EnCon officer.

Lynne will be sending out a history of the Friends of Goodwin and asked that everyone read it and add their information to the summary.

Membership renewals are paused until our 501(c)3 is finished. The attorney working on it has been going through cancer treatment. Lynne will contact him for a status update.

Lori thanked us all for our love and devotion to Goodwin and said she is heartbroken to hear that we are considering disbanding. She hopes we will continue to work in collaboration with DEEP to support the education mission of Goodwin. She hopes we can persevere through the "shift change" at Goodwin. She thanked each one of us for our commitment.

Motion to adjourn at 3:15 PM.

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

Respectfully submitted by Linda Wenner.