

Friends of Goodwin Forest

Meeting Minutes of March 20, 2025 at Goodwin Museum

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, Eliza Kimball, Steve Broderick, Karen Zimmer.

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

The minutes of 1/16/25 were accepted.

Financial Report: We still do not have a full accounting from CFPA. PayPal is currently our bank account. A debit card has been ordered. This is okay with CFPA and their accountant is going to transfer our funds if their auditor approves it.

Friends Day at the Capitol: all Friends groups were delegated to the farthest corner of the Capitol's lobby so people had to seek us out to chat since there was no foot traffic. DEEP deputy Commissioner Mason Trumbull, acting Parks director Jeremy Hall and Representative Pat Boyd came to chat. Lynne told all about the Last Green Valley (LGV) proposal. The new director of Parks will be Brian Wilson, starting tomorrow.

Trail Run: Gabe reported 49 registrations as of today which is above last year at this time. Additional donations have been generous. Bill said t-shirt sales have been going well and people like the gold and black design. About half the runners have purchased t-shirts. Gabe has checked all the routes and Natchaug trails have been taken care of already. There are a few trees down in the Edwards Preserve that will be taken care of this weekend or next. Stan mentioned that the Mennonite community is having a fundraiser (free will donation) dinner at the Fire House on March 29 from 4 to 7 PM and they are always sponsors of the Trail Run.

CFPA partnership meeting: we had a meeting that covered why the Goodwin director position contract wasn't renewed. The financial situation was covered. We are in good standing with them. Bill said he also talked to Andy at the Capitol Day as well. No one was happy with the director contract proposal from DEEP. It did not give us the things we wanted – director, programs and access.

DEEP meeting: Lynne, Linda, Bill and Gabe met with Jeremy Hall (operations), Lori Brant (education), Eric Gileau (Eastern Division operations), Marcella Hube (filling in for Matt Quinn), and Margaret Jackson (special use licensing). Gabe said Matt expects to be back in the Fall. Jeremy outlined the structure of DEEP's Parks division. We discussed the SUL needed for the Trail Run. Margaret said the fees are \$625 for commercial applicants, \$50 for non-profits and if sponsored by a municipality, the license is free. Stan said Hampton would be happy to sponsor the Trail Run. If we do not handle any cash donations, we do not need to pay for an EnCon Officer. All donations will be via our PayPal account. Programs: Jeremy said it is ok for us to teach programs but we need to collaborate with Lori to get staff here to assist. Lynne said we need access to the AED, first aid kit and bathrooms during programs. DEEP needs to replace the inner door and put on a lock so we can have that access. Volunteers need to fill out applications. Trail Run volunteers who are not members of FOG need to sign a waiver for FOG. Last Green Valley: Jeremy said that is not going to happen as that is not DEEP's vision for Goodwin. They want to staff it and program it. They have a plan to make a plan. They want us to be patient. Currently DEEP seasonals are coming from different parks to do programs here. Seasonal are not necessarily good teachers. FOG presenters are good teachers with years of experience. Steve said there is a breakdown

in communications at DEEP as Deputy Commissioner Mason Trumbull is on board with the LGV proposal. After the meeting Jeremy asked Lynne about a new contract with CFPA . Bill suggested bringing in both CFPA and LGV to do programs. Lynne said the speakers that drew crowds are gone. Lynn said DEEP will take over our programs and she will not do them under those conditions. Bill envisions a four-way partnership of FOG, LGV, CFPA and DEEP to promote Goodwin. Karen asked where the sticking point is and Lynne said Lori. There is no response when we ask Lori for information. When doing Forestry Day the DEEP person in charge did nothing to help, there was no response from her. Lynne says it has been 15 months of beating her head against a wall. Steve asked what we do next. Lynne said nothing will happen unless LGV comes here. Steve said we need to push LGV at the deputy commissioner level. A week ago Mason told Pat he wasn't going to let it slide. The first DEEP step is the RFP. Lynne said that the Partnership in Parks program was meant for parks that were unused. Lynne informed Jeremy that LGV is in a National Heritage Corridor. Steve wants to unify our message as far as asking for both a CFPA contract and LGV. There was discussion about how to find a part-time director. A new retiree would be a perfect fit. Dale asked Steve to review the LGV proposal. Lynne said the LGV proposal aligns perfectly with ours. LGV has programs running frequently. Stan sent around a flyer listing all the LGV programs for 2025. Lynne agreed to contact Pat and Senator Jeff Gordon about what happened at the DEEP meeting. Other similar partnerships exist and are spectacularly successful. Steve said an email from Pat said if there is no action on the DEEP RFP by April 2, he is ready to propose legislation for a lease conveyance to pressure DEEP to act.

Joshua's Trust: Karen said Joshua's Trust will present the Group Conservation Award to the Friends of Goodwin on April 26 (Saturday) from 4 – 6 PM at the First Congregational Church in Willimantic. Lynn K will attend to accept. The featured speaker is about beaver impacts.

Lynn said we hope to know by summer if we can do the Master Naturalist program this year. Andy has not written a contract for the Master Naturalist. Beth Morow has done a fantastic job in the past.

Lynne will ask Laurie Gianotti to write the contract for a 4 half-days a week director. Dale suggested a Personal Services Contract (PSA) via DEEP. Dale said Lori has good intentions but is pulled in too many directions to focus on Goodwin.

Kate asked if we should write letters or emails to support the LGV proposal. Potential points to emphasize: "underutilized," "fantastic fit," "unique property," "wonderful opportunity," etc. Lynne will send out such a request to the members to contact their representatives to support the LGV proposal.

Next meeting date April 17, 1 PM at Goodwin Center. (Earth Day is April 22.)

Respectfully submitted by Linda Wenner.