

Raynes Farm Stewardship Committee  
Meeting of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Draft Minutes

Members present: Sally Ward, Bill Campbell, Ginny Raub, Nick Campion, Kathy Norton, Ben Anderson.

Staff present: Kristen Murphy

Sally Ward called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

**Minutes:**

Draft minutes from January 28<sup>th</sup> were reviewed. Kristen proposed a spelling correction to Frank Whittemore's name and revise the word expanding to "expand" under Other Topics. Mr. Campbell motioned to approve as amended. Ginny Raub seconded. Roll Call vote with Ginny, Bill, Nick, and Ben aye, and abstentions from Kathy and Sally. Motion passes.

**LCHIP Application:**

Sally informed the committee given the financial uncertainties presented by the pandemic, in addition to needing to update our budget for the Raynes repairs, it is unlikely we could secure a match either in kind or through warrant article for a grant application so we opted to not move forward with an LCHIP application at this time.

**Upcoming Activities:**

A subset of the committee has been working on interpretive signs for the historic items within the barn. Ginny added that she is working to refine the signs and to set up the interior with a walking tour of the items so its organized in a sequential approach. She is working with Jen Brackett Piskovitz who will donate the artwork and Ginny will donate the printing costs. Bill suggested the committee inspect inside the barn to develop a plan. Kathy and Sally both offered to help.

Sally is working to schedule an organization/clean-up day for inside the barn this fall.

Kristen created a bird virtual walk with Carlos Guindon and Exeter TV and will be sharing that through the website and social media.

**Mowing:**

Sally discussed what she believed the Committee intended for mowing.

For year round mowing: It included

- gravel road to the barn and a width along the stonewall parallel to Newfields Road to accommodate the parking with support from DPW
- cutting back Autumn olive around the field perimeter.
- DPW cutting around the barn
- Trail from the parking lot to the trail in the woods

Outside of the growing season, we would also like to keep clear the path to the cemetery.

Kristen will need to confirm property ownership in association with the former railroad bed.

Bill suggested the northern edge may be a good area to focus. Kristen, Bill, Sally and Kathy will go take a look. Kathy said she paid for David O'Hearn to mow both sides of the stone wall from the parking lot north to the woods edge and that the work has been completed.

We learned after the fact that mowing had begun prior. She spoke to Darren Davis to understand the need for mowing before the July 15<sup>th</sup> lease terms. Darren explained there was a need to cut early due to the dry conditions. They had invested a significant amount of cost by adding wood ash in late fall and was concerned that by July 15<sup>th</sup> the hay would be so dry it would be unusable and that investment would be lost. He committed to coordinate any future changes with the Town prior to mowing. Typically waiting until July 15<sup>th</sup> is not a concern for them but this was a unique circumstance. There was a portion of hay that remained and Carlos Guindon confirmed that there were two active bobolink nest sites within the unmowed section. After inspecting the site, Darren called Kristen to confirm he would be able to leave that portion on the highest part of the field unmowed until July 15. He was supportive of having an annual conversation about mowing needs prior to the mowing based on seasonal conditions. The committee discussed various options for balancing haying, habitat management and recreation onsite. Ultimately the Committee believed a meeting early in the season would be advantageous to all and will recommend that to the Commission.

### **Outdoor Events:**

Ben had received permission from the Conservation Commission for an event at Raynes for the first or second weekend of August. He felt with the strong desire for people to gather as communities reopen, there is an opportunity to bring more attention to Raynes. His original proposal was having an outdoor band in the barn doorway area and an audience on the berm. Given the circumstances he has seen a strong desire for people to do this and asked about the potential to host the event multiple times while ensuring total numbers of people are appropriate for the space and people remain socially distanced. Following the request given the challenges with mowing, he opted to initiate the events across the street at his property and tickets sold out very quickly. Ginny inquired what State standard this type of events need to follow. Ben said according to the State and the Town, this activity would follow outdoor dining meaning people need to be outdoors and remain 6' apart. Nick suggested a layout for an event at Raynes with blankets set on the berm properly distanced that people could purchase in advance. Sally expressed a concern about liability. Ben stated he shared that concern very much and his approach was to be sure there was plenty of space and a hard limit on numbers with mandatory tickets. Ginny suggested eliminating serving food or beverages. Ben suggested pre-marking spaces poses a challenge because you don't know in advance how many people are in a household. He also said food and beverage sales helps to offset expenses and it may not be feasible without that. Sally suggested revisiting the idea after the weekend Word Barn Meadow events have occurred, after Sally, Ben and Kristen meet onsite to evaluate space, and that the Commission should discuss the event (even if a single event) given the changed circumstances. Nick said waiting too long may be a missed opportunity to capitalize on a demographic that is eager to gather. Ginny said lead time for musicians is needed. Kristen added once there is a refined proposal, in addition to the Commission, we need Town manager to review. Sally concurred.

Meeting adjourned at 11:06.