

Switzkill Farm Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2019

Attendance: Mark Hohengasser, Terry Schwendeman, Craig Angard , Rich Ronconi, Nelson Kent and Karen Shimmer.

Visitors: Martin Szinger, Tom O'Malley, Roger Chrysler, Ted Kunker, Cindy Morrison, Mike Vincent, Lisa Carr and Aaron Carr

Meeting was called to order at 7:00. January Minutes were approved.

The town did some extra plowing and delivered culvert pipes for the Winterfest, which was greatly appreciated.

The Agricultural Committee requested another dumpster from the town to continue to clean out area for the Museum and an inspection still needs to be performed to rule out any safety issues.

The Committee to address dark sky compliance will meet to prepare an assessment of changes needed to meet dark sky requirements and will then present that assessment to the Town Board for approval. Craig Ansgard agreed to send out an email to the committee in order to set up a date to complete the assessment.

Karen Schimmer will contact the Town Engineer to discuss corrective action to address the leaking roof around the lodge chimney. There was discussion about protecting the flooring from water damage until the leak can be addressed. The lodge dining room painting has been completed. Deb Bajouwa was suggested as someone who might be willing to assist with landscaping at the lodge. Hardscapes should be put in place before softscapes are installed. After monitoring the crawlspace temperatures in the lodge, Nelson Kent feels that 60 might be the most appropriate temperature to keep the lodge during the winter to prevent freezing pipes. He put insulation in an open vent in the basement and it was noted that that needs to be opened during the summer to allow ventilation.

It was suggested that Mark Hohengasser, as chair, should have a key to access the lodge. There has been an issue with access for people who have rented the property. Hopefully, this would help prevent such problems.

Stop the Bleed, supported by Switzkill Valley Volunteers, was a very successful event held in February at the lodge. The group "Meet Up" from Albany had a snowshoe event at Switzkill Farm. The SF scheduled hike and the RC Club also used the property in February.

Richard Ronconi wrote a letter to the Altamont Enterprise and the Greenville Pioneer to promote Winterfest. He has offered to write articles to the local papers to alert the public of events. The Middleburg Mountain Eagle is another source for promotion. Karen Schimmer sent photos of the Meet Up group and the Stop the Bleed Event to the Enterprise.

Switzkill Valley Volunteers is a new grass roots, not-for-profit organization created to serve as the Friends Group for SF and to also provide assistance throughout the larger community. SVV has contacted Albany County Sewer and Water to request, and they have agreed, to provide us with one hundred plants for our Earth Day Event. They have asked SF where they can best help us. One immediate need that SVV has identified is food service for our Winterfest event and will be providing that service.

Helderberg Community Organization is a newly formed group in the Hilltowns. Terry Schwendeman will attend their first introductory meeting and will inform that Organization that SF is a facility available for many different uses and will also deliver SVV brochures to introduce them to HCO as well.

Mike Vincent represented the Berne Fire department and inquired about vehicles we might want for Winterfest and what time the event starts.

It was suggested that we might concentrate on involving more vendors at events. The Middleburg Fourth Friday events might be a great place to get info on local vendors.

Richard Ronconi has been involved on the advisory council for the Berne Chapter of FAA and has been promoting SF. FAA mentioned an interest in having bee hives at SF. Open Spaces purchased a property

on Cheese Hill Road and has beams from barns they are removing available to us if we have a use for them.

Plans have been created for both a snow or non-snow Winterfest event. It was suggested that a sign placed down on Switzkill Road identifying the Winterfest location would be helpful. There is a PVC sign donated by Sue Hawkes-Teeter in one of the barns that could possibly meet that need and could be adapted for use at all our events. Karen Schimmer will look into purchasing six folding tables for crafts and food.

Martin Szinger suggested that locating wild bee hives at SF might be an exciting summer event. Once identified, this could then be run as an educational event. A pollinator garden could also then be planned.

Mke Vincent recommended vertical water tanks installed to address any further water shortage issues. Monitoring water levels before and after events could also then be performed. The septic tank manhole was located by MikeVincent and Ted Kunker and the tank has a 1,000 gallon capacity.

There are three board positions open and so far there are three applications submitted to the Town Board. The Town Board will appoint new members at their next meeting on Feb. 13th.

Repectfully submitted,

Terry Schwendeman

