

Switzkill Farm Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2019

Attendance: Mark Hohengasser, Terry Schwendeman, Rich Ronconi, Craig Angard, Martin Szinger, Dee Woessner, Anne Cook and Karen Schimmer

Guests: Tom O'Malley, Roger Chrysler, Michael Vincent, Lisa Carr, Aaron Carr, Debra Bajouwa

Meeting was called to order to 7:06 p.m.

March 2019 minutes were discussed and approved.

Debra Bajouwa was verbally thanked for her creation of event posters.

MikeVincent inquired about the status of the water/wastewater upgrade and suggested that this project be addressed as soon as possible.

There was a question about the hours town maintenance staff spend at Switzkill Farm. It was agreed that better monitoring of hours spent at SF would be beneficial to determine what is being completed and what still needs to be accomplished.

Discussion was had about tracking the income SF generates. Karen Schimmer said she would look into this. Karen also stated that Anita Clayton has suggested that the BKW Steam camp should pay for port-a-potties while using the park this summer. Anita was also concerned with liabilities issues that could be associated with a Girl Scout troop that also wants to use the park this summer. Karen said she would speak with the town attorney to clarify park policy.

A safety inspection of the barn intended as the proposed agricultural museum needs to take place before any more planning for the museum can move forward. Roger Chrysler, Tom O'Malley and Ted Kunker cleaned out the pheasant shed to prepare the museum site. Roger and Tom spoke with someone interested in donating some old farm equipment for the museum.

Karen Schimmer mentioned that the BKW STEAM camp is hoping to have access to the waterfall. Mark Hohengasser said he would have that trail ready and mentioned that the children would have to creek walk for two hundred feet to gain access to the waterfall. The camp may need to use the great room of the lodge if there is inclement weather.

A Family Farm Day will be held on Sept. 8th from ten a.m. until 4 p.m. This event is put by Albany County Soil and Water, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the USDA and SUNY Cobleskill and is hosted by Two Rock Ranch in Berne, NY. Over 1,000 people are expected to attend. HHA will be having their farm and artisan tour as well that weekend. Switzkill Farm has been invited to provide a display table to promote the park. SVV has been invited to participate with a bake sale.

A working session will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. to update the Game Farm Road Project Interim Report. Mark Hohengasser will notify Anita Clayton of the meeting. Once the report has been emended and the SF board votes to accept it, a presentation will be made to the Town Board.

Rich Ronconi met with FFA to discuss possible uses of SF by FFA. Mark Hohengasser met with SUNY Cobleskill and they expressed an interested in using SF for wildlife and/or biology studies as part of their curriculum. Mark Hohengasser contacted BKW to see if any students were interestd to put up a display for our Earth Day Event but has not heard back from them.

A register placed in the park would provide an idea of various uses of the park. Mark Hohengasser and Tom O'Malley will look into creating one for SF.

Karen Schimmer has ordered hot coal boxes for the grills providing a safe place for park users to dispose of hot coals after using the grills.

Approval from the Town Board is needed in order to ask for donations for any of the furniture left on the property that the farm has not further use for.

The underground propane tanks will be removed and replaced with above-ground tanks. The lodge roof leak has yet to be addressed. The retreat house is still leaking as well. Establishing adequate parking for SF is still a top priority. Inadequate parking can deter rental of the lodge for larger events. Some possible ways of accomplishing landscaping could include accepting donations of plants from local nurseries with a recognition plaque or creating a "giving tree" naming donations made in memory of loved ones by local residents. Dee Woessner would be interested in participating in the implementation of the landscaping project.

A radio-controlled car class and a meditation class were held at the lodge in March. Martin Szinger suggested that we could plan an overnight camping event. There was suggestion that it could be worked into the plans for the Father's Day Event to be held in June. The Mother's Day event on the scheduled calendar will be deleted.

Martin Szinger met with Anita Clayton to discuss the creation of a SF webpage. He has created a plan for the webpage and once the SF board has approved his plan, Martin will make a presentation requesting approval of a SF webpage to the Town Board.

Plans for the Earth Day Celebration were reviewed. Set up will begin at 9:00 on Saturday morning. Final cleanup will be 9:00 Sunday morning, the 28th. Dedication of a pollinator garden was discussed but it was recognized that more planning needed to happen before the garden could be dedicated.

A tour of the property will be scheduled for the new SF board members. Joel Willsey, a town board member, would also participate in the tour.

Next meeting will be May 7, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Schwendeman

