

Switzkill Farm Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2019

Attendance: Mark Hohengasser, Rich Ronconi, Nelson Kent, Martin Szinger, and Anne Cook

Guests: Ted Kunker

Meeting was called to order to 7:01 p.m.

October 2019 minutes were discussed and approved.

The advertising committee met and determined that their goals and objectives for next year would include advertising at the same level as this year, with the addition of creating banners for Winterfest and Earth Day celebrations. Rich Ronconi suggested that an ad be run in the Altamont Enterprise for events as well. The committee also hopes to include reaching out to more papers and better signage. Also mailing out an introductory letter to possible interested groups will be accomplished. Promoting outdoor usage of the facility during good weather and improvement of signage at the entrance of the park during events are additional goals. Ted Kunker noted that there is a white plastic sign in one of the barns that could meet the needs of improved signage at the park entrance.

Martin Szinger will improve accessibility and usefulness of the Switzkill Farm on-line calendar. Including private events on the calendar may be useful in making the community aware that the space is available to rent for private events. It was recognized that communication between the Town and the SF Board is important to make sure no competing events are scheduled for the same day. Nelson checked into prices for the printing of a display/advertising calendar. It appears to be cost prohibitive. Perhaps an on-line version could be promoted on the SF website and the Facebook page.

The International Dark Skies application was never submitted. Mark Hohegasser has been talking with our liaison at IDA. The application will entail a large amount of effort and does not appear to be something that can be accomplished before 2020. Installation of light shields will bring the property into IDA compliance. Mark will forward recommended templates for the application process to the SF Board.

Community outreach and partnerships could include the Berne town library, future farmers of America, etc. as a means to get more support for Switzkill Farm.

There has been no further discussion or investigation about the repair of any of the barns. Ted Kunker noted that he at one time had an estimate of \$20,000 to repair the building proposed for the agricultural museum. The town engineer quote \$100,000 for repairs. As it stands, the buildings are not safe for public use but can be used for SF storage. Rich Ronconi reflected that the first priority should be to improve the appearance of the lodge, thus creating the potential for more income generated in rentals. This could then justify the request for those dollars being spent on other locations in the park.

The roof at the retreat house is still leaking.

The SF Board members feel strongly that the first priority to be addressed in 2020 at the park is exterior painting of the lodge. The proposed 2020 budget submitted to the Town Board has been reduced, although the budget has not yet been finalized by the Town.

Nelson Kent met with Randy Bashwinger to discuss SF road maintenance. Drainage has caused ruts and potholes.

SVV suggested that at future events the craft tables not be located in front of the music source, more tables and chairs be made available for eating and dry ice for fog at boo bash would be fun. Other suggestions to improve events are the addition of a speaker system to make announcements at events, better lighting on the path coming down from the shale pit during the haunted hike, a nighttime hay ride, lighting for the outdoor games could be beneficial, and a signup sheet placed at events so people can leave contact information.

There was discussion regarding changing the date of SF meetings to accommodate possible new board members. A change to the by-laws to allow a majority of attending active board members at a meeting be considered a quorum was suggested.

Karen Schimmer will present to the Town Board the SF introductory letter prepared by Anne Cook for approval for distribution to potential interested parties.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Schwendeman

