

Switzkill Farm Board Meeting

Town of Berne
PO Box 57
Berne, NY 12023

Date: July 7, 2016

Board members present: Ted Kunker, Lee Jones, Mark Sengenberger, Mark Hohengasser, Diane Kingston, Richard Ronconi, Karen Schimmer (Board liaison), and other interested citizens including: David Barnard, Bernard Cogni, Tom O'Malley, Craig Angard, Sue Hawkes-Teeter

Ted Kunker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Review of minutes: The Board reviewed the May 3, 2016 draft minutes. There being no changes, Mr. Hohengasser moved to accept the minutes. Mr. Sengenberger seconded and the minutes were approved, 5-0.

Guest Comments/Correspondence:

Mr. O'Malley said that some hikers became lost on the property. The Board discussed increasing trail marking/mapping. Ms. Schimmer passed out a sample "star-gazing pass" which would permit people to access the property during the evening/nighttime hours to view the sky. Visitors entering GFR will be required to sign-in/sign-out at a designated site which will include "you-are-here" maps. HESO members will be asked to call either Daine Poole or the Town Clerk to give notice of visiting after hours.

Old Business:

Marketing Update – A final decision will be made later in the month on the name for the GFR. Mr. Kunker asked that Ms. Schimmer follow up with Kevin on dates of July 15, 18, 22, 29, & 31st and in August: 5, 12, 19 & 26th for County inmate work detail.

Grants – Ms. Kingston spoke about Lowe's grants and that an application needs to be completed and confirmation made that the Town qualifies. Mr. Kunker suggested using the grant \$ for campsites, lean to's, fire pits, etc. The Board discussed the pros and cons of cabins on the land.

Working Group on Land/Facilities – Mr. Hohengasser reported on meeting with Andy Garrison from The Trail Conference regarding the possibility of routing the Long Path through the GFR property.

Calendar Update: Mr. Kunker urged Board members to take a look at the GFR calendar online. Mr. Kunker moved to appoint treasurer duties to Mr. Jones. Mr. Hohengasser seconded and the motion passed, 6-0. The Board discussed pricing of using/renting the property including cleaning. Methods to enforce the no-alcoholic beverage policy were considered.

Working Group on Observatory – Mr. Angard reported to the Board on the recent HESO gathering. He mentioned letters of support from local schools and colleges. He asked the board whether there would be an additional building besides the observatory for lectures/gatherings and whether the retreat house might be used for overnight stays. The Board discussed the get-together at the GFR on June 25th. Several guests voiced concerns that the Board is concentrating too much on observatory related matters and not enough attention to making the property ready for residents' use.

Mr. Angard presented the Board with a pedestrian/bicycling sign made available with help from the Albany Co. Sheriff.

Pricing – Mr. Kunker asked Board members to review the proposed pricing sheet and come to the next meeting with feedback and ideas.

Band Event – Mr. Kunker reported on the June 25th event. Forever Rural provided food and donations in the amount of \$658.72 were accepted. Mr. Kunker thanked everyone involved. It was noted that fire detectors need to be fixed and reconnected. It was estimated that 40-50 people attended.

New Business:

The Board agreed that marking trails with blazes is a priority.

The Library will be holding a teen event at the property on August 19th.

There being no additional business before the Board, Mr. Ronconi moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Sengenberger seconded and the motion passed, 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Hill Brown
GFR Board Secretary