

Minutes of a Conservation Commission Meeting – 8 June 2018

Members present: Peter Vincent, Christina Brown, Geoff Kontje, Lil Province, Stuart Lollis

Absent: Bob Avakian, Jeff Carlson

Staff: Lisa Morrison, Jane Varkonda

Lindsay Brown from the Farm Institute was present for a follow-up discussion regarding events at the farm. The farm would like to hold small weekly dinners starting the last week in June ending first week of August. The food would be provided by local caterers using meat and vegetables from the farm whenever possible. The number of diners would be capped at 100 and the dinner would last from 5:30 to 7:30. Acoustic blue grass music would provide entertainment.

The farm and the gardens will both be open during the dinners. The idea is to encourage people to come to the farm for dinner, and then get them interested in the farm's other programs and workshops. The price would be \$24 for members, \$30 for nonmembers. The farm hopes to clear about \$1000 per dinner. No alcohol will be served.

Kontje said that the primary issue for the Commission is parking and traffic. Vincent said that dust and noise is a perennial complaint from the neighbors on Aero Avenue.

Varkonda noted that regular applications of calcium chloride and speed bumps help to keep the dust down. She commented that some of the traffic on Aero is also caused by people cutting through the farm to get to the Right Fork diner.

Morrison suggested that a staff member greet the cars at the beginning of Aero, direct them to parking, and remind them to drive slowly.

Kontje and Province said that they were generally in favor of the proposal and understand the need for the farm to generate more income.

Ms. Brown said that they are attempting to improve the farm's soil to bolster production and profit. They are rotating their animals three times a week to prevent over grazing. There are currently 40 cows on the farm.

Ms. Brown mentioned that they have just employed a new summer farm manager and have several candidates for the year-round manager position.

Ms. Brown noted that although the farm loses money every year, it also gets a little more profitable every year. The Trustees are able to provide expertise and shared equipment.

Ms. Brown noted that camp enrollment is on track and the bids for the teaching kitchen are in. Ms. Youmans will be bringing the kitchen plans in for approval. To date there is \$750,000 funding for the kitchen project.

The agent noted that the town has told the Right Fork diner that they cannot have amplified music on their deck in a residential neighborhood, so it would not be right to allow the farm institute to have amplified outdoor music at their dinners. Province noted that the dinners would only be once a week for a period of about six weeks, whereas the diner is open seven days a week all season. Ms. Brown said that they are fine with acoustic music at the dinners.

Ms. Brown assured the board that there is adequate parking for more than for 50 cars.

Province made a motion to approve the dinners and other events listed in the proposal submitted on 21 May with the following conditions:

1. Acoustic music only except at the farm's three large events.
2. For the weekly dinners, a staff member is to greet guests at the entrance to Aero Avenue and remind them to drive slowly.
3. Parking for the dinners will be located in the lots adjacent to the farm buildings.

Lollis seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Ms. Brown noted that for Sheepalooza and the Wild Food Challenge overflow parking is available in the field.

Ms. Brown explained that another proposal involves bringing a popsicle truck to the farm during certain times: Mondays from noon to 4 p.m. and Fridays from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. beginning the first week in July. The truck will just be an amenity for people already at the farm and will not increase traffic as such. There will be no advertising except a chalkboard at the end of the road. Try out for year. Coordinate with board of health.

Brown made a motion to approve the proposal for one year on a trial basis. The farm is to coordinate the proposal with the Board of Health. Kontje seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.

Approved: _____