

**Minutes of Friends of Auerfarm Scenic Reserve (FASR) Steering Committee Meeting
7-26-17
Town Hall, Bloomfield, CT**

Attendees: Elizabeth Appel, Jo-Ann Bowen, Naomi Cohen, John Maier, Jeffrey Read, Kate Shafer, and Christopher Shepard, and Stephen Bayer, Eric Hammerling, and Beth Schiro.

Meeting commenced 6:35 pm, Kate Shafer volunteered to take notes for minutes.

1. Agenda: John Maier made a motion to approve the agenda. Elizabeth Appel seconded. All approved.
2. Steering Committee: Stephen Bayer made a motion to form a steering committee composed of the attendees listed above. John Maier seconded. All approved.
3. Governance:
 - a. Christopher Shepard made a motion to adopt Robert's Rules of Order. Naomi seconded. All approved.
 - b. The following committee members volunteered for the following positions, through the end of CY 2017: Christopher Shepard, Chair; Eric Hammerling, Treasurer (or advisor to the Treasurer in the event another member volunteers to be Treasurer); Kate Shafer, Secretary. After a short discussion, Jo-Ann Bowen made a motion to approve the foregoing members for the foregoing positions. Jeffrey Read seconded. All approved.
 - c. Naomi Cohen and Elizabeth Appel agreed to research suitable mission statements and bylaws and come up with a proposal for the Committee's consideration. Eric Hammerling suggested looking at bylaws of the Friends of Connecticut State Parks, among others.
 - d. A draft Fiscal Sponsorship Grant Agreement between Connecticut Forest and Park Association Incorporated (CFPA) and FASR was presented. Christopher Shepard made a motion that FASR enter into this agreement, and also made a motion to table that motion, so that the Committee can review the agreement before the next Committee meeting. During the subsequent discussion, Christopher Shepard explained the content of the agreement. There was a discussion about liability and indemnity issues, during which it was clarified that FASR is not a formal entity, and members are all technically volunteers of CFPA and as such are covered by CFPA's liability insurance. Eric Hammerling agreed to provide more information about this. Christopher Shepard agreed to collect any feedback from Steering Committee members prior to the next Committee meeting, and there will be further discussion at the next meeting.
4. Infrastructure:
 - a. Eric Hammerling gave an update on plans to develop a trail (or trails). He has met with the 4-H Education Center at Auerfarm, which made suggestions shown on a plan distributed at the meeting. He has met informally with the MDC which, at least preliminarily, would accept a route through MDC property, and they hope to be able to obtain MDC board approval to open up the gate currently blocking the path route. Eric has also spoken with DEEP's trails coordinator and is working on getting a meeting with

the State. It would be helpful to walk the trail again; committee members should call Eric if they are interested. The committee discussed trail maintenance obligations. CFPA will be able to provide assistance and manpower to establish the trail and would ask FASR to consider accepting the maintenance obligations; also possible to engage the Town of Bloomfield's assistance. There was also a robust discussion of creating a Universal Access Trail, led by Jo-Ann Bowen. While no official motion was made in this regard, the Committee was enthusiastic. Jo-Ann agree to continue to lead the effort to look into this, including contacting Andrew French, and looking at existing CT State Parks that have similar trails.

- b. Eric Hammerling spoke to Tom Tyler of DEEP about the status of demolition of the existing buildings on the Auerfarm Scenic Reserve (ASR) and was told that it was "still on the list." The bonding that was set aside to do the work has been expended, so no current funds are available, and there is still clearance needed from the State Historic Commission and the Town of Bloomfield. This will possibly happen in Spring of 2018. Eric suggested a letter from FASR urging them to move forward.
 - c. Beth Schiro, Christopher Shepard and Eric Hammerling will look at advisability of preserving existing cultivated plants around the existing buildings to ascertain whether they should be replanted elsewhere prior to demolition of the buildings. DEEP and Justin from 4-H may assist with this.
 - d. There was a discussion about the old orchard trees, whether they might be harboring pests, whether they should be removed, and whether FASR might be able to realize any monetary value from grafts. Beth Schiro will talk to Lyman Orchard and the UConn Master Gardener working with 4-H. Christopher Shepard will also talk to Beth Bye and Robin Kriesberg about this.
5. Outreach Programming
- a. It was agreed that September 14 is too near-term to plan a launch of FASR, so it was agreed that we would pursue the possibility of holding our launch as part of the 4-H Farm Day on October 14 (rain date, October 15), possibly having the ASR as a stop on a hayride tour of the area. Christopher Shepard will follow up with 4-H about this. Chris Norwood, Beth Schiro, Jeffrey Read and Eric Hammerling have all volunteered to help with planning the launch.
 - b. Christopher Shepard will email information to the Committee about events and programs for the ASR, and about online and social media presence.
 - c. It was agreed that Christopher Shepard and Eric Hammerling would send an update to the larger group of FASR members
6. The next Steering Committee Meetings were set for August 31 and September 14. Eric Hammerling noted that the Friends of Connecticut State Parks annual meeting is set for September 12 at Hammonasset Beach State Park.
7. Stephen Bayer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Naomi Cohen seconded. All approved.