

# Approved Minutes-Lachat Town Farm Commission

December 3, 2024

Meeting held in person, Lachat Town Farm

*Attending:* Katherine McConnaughey (Chair), Carol Baldwin, Stirling Collins, Ellen McCormick, Bruce Plotkin, Erica Reiner, Nicholas Bell, Aidan Baker, Junior Advisor (Guests: Anita Dinwoodie, LTF Exec. Dir.; Friends of Lachat Board member, Alissa Stoltz; Michael Reiner)

Meeting commenced at 8:56 pm.

Minutes: Motion made by Bruce, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ellen, to approve the minutes from our November 4, 2024 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

*Upcoming Events:* Anita described what's ahead: Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> Wreath making (2<sup>nd</sup> year); Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> Holiday Market with 30 vendors, a food truck, and a winter coat drive for Open Doors in Norwalk; Dec. 14 Stella Blues Band acoustic concert; Dec. 20 & 21 Candy Cane Hunt with a collection of new toys for the Domestic Violence Crisis Center; First Sunday of January- Sunday Supper with Tony (Classic Italian dinner); Jan. 20 MLK Day event.

*Chairwoman's Report:* Kat discussed some new signage: Gayle made a new map that includes Stella's Way and Seth's Wilderness Playground and Kat is also getting a couple estimates for other small farm signage. One of the signage vendors contacted made the "Erica's Bee Garden" sign as a contribution! "No dirt bike" signage was posted in the kiosk. If dirt bikers are seen on the property, they should be told that no dirt bikes are allowed on Town Property and particularly not at Lachat Town Farm. The police could also be called, according to Carol's meeting with Chief Henion. Kat will submit to the Town our schedule of Commission meetings for next year; the meetings will continue to be held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 in person at the Farm. Anita is also preparing a list of the schedule of programs for next year as required by the Settlement Agreement.

## Committee Reports:

*Building Maintenance:* Carol reported that Rob Sanders put handles on the additional new kitchen cabinets. Re: Grounds- Cedar posts were put in to delineate the upper field vernal pool wetlands/no car/no mow zone using ARPA funds designated for wetlands protection. Remaining ARPA funds are enough we hope to also make repairs to the tractor path including a berm to prevent erosion run off into the wetlands, a rain garden in the upper

field to prevent excessive water pooling, and replanting as part of the wetlands invasives removal project. The work needs to be completed by the end of 2025. Additionally, Carol mentioned that she met with Aidan regarding the renovation of the Compost Area. Aidan priced out the cost of replacing the rotting pallets with chain linked fencing. Friends of Lachat previously approved the cost presented. The compost bins will be made wider to accommodate our tractor bucket and an additional bin will be added. Anita will arrange a meeting with Carlos, Carol, and Aidan to move ahead with this project. The goal is to complete the work before next year's gardening season begins (goal date - April 15). Kat will help with getting signage that will replicate what Wakeman Farm has used effectively and composting instructions (including a diagram) will be part of the Community Garden application materials.

**Grounds Maintenance:** Stirling said that the person who was supposed to build a wood shed won't be available until the spring. And Carol said she would reach out to architect Rob Sanders again about what's needed to move ahead with adding storage space to the carriage barn.

**Barnyard:** Kat said that Collette bunny is suffering from "wet tail" but seems to be improving. Kat is hoping that perhaps the boy scouts or girl scouts could be enlisted to enhance the outdoor bunny pen. And possibly also help build more small educational kiosks around the animal areas.

**Bee yard:** Erica presented her LAST bee yard report (sadly) as she is stepping off the Commission. She was pleased to report that the farm produced 71 (4 oz) jars of honey this year that will be sold at the Holiday Market. She mentioned that she thinks that the success of this year's hives was partially due to allowing our meadows, and particularly the clover in the meadows, to grow with less frequent mowing. The Native Bee hive will be moved, for the winter, to the dairy barn exterior. Erica will meet with Karin Feingold to come up with a design for her Bee Garden; she would like to use native flowers and perhaps a fruit tree that honey bees would specifically seek out. (Ellen will tag on perhaps to planning with Karin to place a plant order for Peter's Garden). Erica also mentioned that she will talk with the new bee keeper, Ryan, about what to do with all the bee keeping equipment we have accumulated. Erica feels we should, at most, have only 3 honey bee hives on site. Of our 3 hives this year, we lost one, so we are down to 2. The Adopt-A-Hive program should cover hive costs and our bee keeper, Ryan's fees, . She is also hoping to receive a grant from the Whole Kids Bee Research Grant.

**Farm Equipment:** Stirling reported that the tractors will be stored in the dairy barn over the winter with drip pans to catch any oil drips.

***Wishlist:*** Bruce suggested that we might rethink the Wishlist and whether there is a better approach.

An audience member, Michael Reiner, expressed his gratitude for the welcoming community that he feels Lachat Farm is.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 7, 2025 at 7:30pm at Lachat Town Farm.

Minutes humbly submitted by Carol Baldwin.