

**BROOKSIDE FARM MUSEUM  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2023**

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
EAST LYME, CT

2023 OCT -2 P 3: 36

*Karen Hill*  
TOWN CLERK

**Present:** Robert Seifel, Chairman  
Maggi Prokop  
Cheri Meier  
Richard MacDonald  
William Follett  
Wanda Stazick

**Also Present:** Donna Massung, President of the Friends  
Annah Perch, Curator  
Jan Larson  
Teri Yuhas, member of the Agribusiness Committee

**I. CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Seifel called the September 27, 2023 Brookside Farm Museum Meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** Mr. Seifel asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the Brookside Farm Museum Regular Meeting Minutes of August 23, 2023.

**MOTION (1):** Mr. Follett moved to approve the August 23, 2023 Brookside Farm Museum Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented. Seconded by Ms. Meier. Ms. Stazick abstained from voting. (5-0-1) Motion carried.

**III. REPORTS**

a. Agenda Additions.

**MOTION (2):** Ms. Meier moved to add approval for an archeology dig at the Brookside Farm Museum, under New Business, item d. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (6-0) Unanimous.

b. Public Delegations. There were no comments at this time from guests.

c. Ex-Officio. Mr. Cunningham was unable to be present, and there was no report.

d. Curator. (See attached report). Ms. Perch asked commission members to speak to the town staff about maintenance needed for the house. Mr. Follett volunteered to go with Ms. Perch.

Ms. Perch reported Ms. Meekhoff is interested in creating a historic meadow on the house grounds.

Ms. Meier asked Ms. Perch to let her know if she needs help with cataloging items in the house.

Ms. Perch stated she would like to work with youngsters. Ms. Meier suggested that she contact Wil Reed.

Ms. Perch reported East Lyme High School students interviewed her and took a tour of the house. They would like to write an article in their school newspaper.

- e. Chairman. Mr. Seifel spoke with Ron Bence regarding painting of the house. Mr. Bence is hoping to have it painted this fall.

Mr. Seifel spoke to the Finance Director. He was informed the Brookside Farm Museum was in good financial condition. Some of the items listed were encumbered.

Mr. Follett asked what is the Brookside Farm Museum budget used for? Mr. Seifel replied operating expenses, supplies, fuel, maintenance of the landscape, museum programs and telephone.

- f. Financial. Mr. Seifel asked a commission member to volunteer for the Treasurer of the Brookside Farm Museum. Mr. Follett volunteered to be Treasurer.

**MOTION (3): Ms. Prokop moved to accept Mr. Follett's offer to be Treasurer of the Brookside Farm Museum. Seconded by Ms. Stazick. (6-0) Unanimous.**

- 1. Status Update. The balance in the Brookside Farm Museum budget is \$5,733.31. There is also \$4,648.59 encumbered.
  - 2. Presentation of Bills. No bills were presented.
  - 3. 2023-2024 Budget. There was no discussion on the 2023-2024 Brookside Farm Museum budget.
  - 4. Collections. There were no new collections.
- g. Correspondence. No new correspondence was received.

#### IV. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Property Maintenance
  - 1. General Maintenance Report. There was no further discussion on maintenance.
  - 2. Painting. There was no further discussion on painting.
- b. Museum Development. There was no discussion on museum development.
- c. Events.

October 21 from 1-3 p.m. Slightly Scary Stories and S'mores will be held.

December 10 from 1-3 p.m., a Holiday Open House will be held.

## V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Barn Rentals. Ms. Meier reported she was contacted about a birthday party in the barn. She cleaned the side of the barn. She felt the \$50 deposit should be non-refundable. She suggested having a plan for rotating the numerous archeological dig items.

On October 3 Wil Reed toured the house with students.

- b. Historical Properties Commission. Ms. Prokop reported the Samuel Smith House will have an Open House on Saturday.

The Historical Society will hold its Annual Potluck on October 17, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

- c. Discussion with Teri Yuhas from the Agribusiness Committee. Ms. Yuhas reported she and Ms. Perch discussed working together. They are interested in educational programs. Ms. Yuhas made a presentation to Parks and Recreation. She also contacted the Superintendent of Schools.

They are looking at cyber security.

She reached out to UCONN's Extension Services. They are trying to revitalize urban areas. She went to Keeney Park where the youngsters are growing mushrooms. They have held several classes. They are focusing on what the youngsters can learn and they are willing to come to the Brookside Farm Museum.

The Agribusiness Committee holds seminars at the library. She felt this Commission and the Agribusiness Committee would be a good partnership. Ms. Yuhas has chickens and goats. She would also like to partner with students. Ms. Stazick suggested working with the Middle School. Ms. Meir suggested working with students after school.

Liz Hill toured the house and suggested the possibility of having a play.

Mr. Follett suggested creating a community garden. Ms. Stazick felt it would need to be fenced in. There was discussion on the youngsters developing a garden. Ms. Yuhas felt working through the process could be a learning experience for the students. She suggested that youngsters work at Rocky Neck Village, if there is interest. Ms. Perch felt the Agribusiness Committee and the Brookside Farm Museum Commission could work on having a farm at the house. Mr. Christensen would like to have a meeting at the house.

- d. Approval for an Archeology Dig at the Brookside Farm Museum.

**MOTION (4): Ms. Meier moved to approve an Archeology Dig at the Brookside Farm Museum. Seconded by Ms. Prokop. (6-0) Unanimous.**

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION (5): Ms. Prokop moved to adjourn the September 27, 2023 Brookside Farm Museum Regular Meeting at 8:25 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Meier. (6-0)  
Unanimous**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary**

Curators Report  
September 27, 2023

I continue to await the Collections Assessment Report. I have followed up and there are delays on their end. This report will inform future grant applications.

I have also been waiting for the Connecticut Collections portal to open up so we can start cataloging into the portal. But I'm not going to wait anymore.

I attended online training on the Homegrown National Park movement and think this is a great way to start thinking about the outdoor space at Brookside.

On October 24 I will be attending a virtual class on creating a homegrown national park. The homegrown national park movement is a good one that Brookside could get behind to help restore the back 40 into something environmentally useful. Please join this event to begin to become experts on what we would like to ask the Town for permission to do. This initiative would take a good deal of collaboration with the other gardening groups in East Lyme and southeast Connecticut.

[homegrownnationalpark.org](http://homegrownnationalpark.org)

<https://www.avonctlibrary.info/event/homegrown-national-park-doug-tallamy/>

I also attended a virtual training on Creating a Happy Habitat: Virtual Lecture with Nancy DuBrule-Clemente (Nature's Best Hope Series). This was fascinating and extremely helpful as we think about what to do with the outdoors.

I studied the National Endowment for the Humanities grant programs by attending two webinars and researching more. There are a number of grants we can apply for and I will get the process going. I believe these grants could guide our work for the next couple of years if we were to be successful.

I reached out to Andrei Harwell, Director, Urban Design Workshop, Yale University School of Architecture to see if they might be interested in revisiting the barn project. He was not aware of the project so I prepared a small package with project details and mailed it to him. We are tentatively scheduled to follow up when he gets through a busy time.

I met with the Boy Scouts of East Lyme. There are two Eagle Scouts who would like to do projects in the woods. The first is restoring the kiosk sign, and the little boardwalk, and clearing the pathways past the boardwalk. The second Eagle Scout will clear the next section of the path and create an outdoor classroom. I haven't heard from them since the day we met, but am hopeful this will pan out this fall.

I attended the Agricultural Commission monthly meeting to discuss partnering with the commission on various farm-related projects.

Propose:

Brookside Farm Museum Commission to work with the town to determine what outdoor projects we can propose and raise funds for. Get an answer in October.

Friends to work on a year-end annual appeal including purchasing stationary, and envelopes, buying stamps, preparing mailing list.