

BROOKSIDE FARM MUSEUM  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 24, 2024

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
EAST LYME, CT

2024 APR 30 P 12:29

Present: Cheri Meier  
Richard MacDonald  
Wanda Stazick

*Carol Hill*  
TOWN CLERK

Absent: William Follett

Also Present: Donna Massung, President of the Friends  
Annah Perch, Curator  
Jason Debble, Ex officio

- I. **CALL TO ORDER.** Ms. Meier called the April 24, 2024 Brookside Farm Museum Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** The Commission was asked for additions, deletions or corrections to the March 27, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Brookside Farm Museum.

**MOTION (1): Ms. MacDonald moved to approve the March 27, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Seconded by Ms. Stazick. (3-0) Unanimous.**

III. **REPORTS**

- a. **Agenda Additions.** There were no additions to the Agenda.
- b. **Public Delegations.** There were no guests.
- c. **Ex Officio.** Mr. Debble reported all budgets will go to the Annual Town Meeting on May 13 at East Lyme High School. A Referendum will be held on May 23 at East Lyme Community Center.

Mr. Debble informed the Commission this Friday at 7 p.m. there will be an extravaganza at the Planetarium.

A woman by the stage name of Anna May approached him about her performing at Brookside Farm Museum.

On Sunday June 9 at 2 p.m. a free concert will be held in the barn by Bears Don't Care.

On July 7 at 2 p.m. The Bards of Gungywamp will give a free concert in the barn.

On July 5 at 7 p.m. The Interrobangs will perform in the Band Shell.

- d. **Curator.** See attached Curator's Report.
- e. **Chairman.** See attached Chairman's Report.

f. **Financial.** See attached Financial Report.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

**1. Events Friends' Report – Donna Massung.**

- Plant and Tag Sale on May 4 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- The house will be cleaned on May 18 at 9 a.m.
- Spring Tea on May 19 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. \$10
- Victorian Lady June 2 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. \$15
- Museum Open House Day, June 8 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Tea June 12, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- Children's Tea, July 17, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. \$5
- Irish Music with the Clan O'Leary Band August 18 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Trivia Night September 21 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Slightly Scary Stories & S'mores October 20 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- Holiday Open House December 11 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Barn Rentals.** Ms. Meier reported on the following rentals: On May 17 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. by the Barn for Artistic Youth; August 10 for a baby shower and September 28 for a wedding reception.
- b. **Historical Properties Commission.** Ms. Massung reported a profit of \$825 was made from the sale of house plaques. It will be split between the three historical houses. On May 19 the Lee House will have its Potluck Supper at the American Legion. She reported the Lee House will have its Flea Market on May 25 and May 26. On August 17 there will be an archeological dig at the Lee House. The cost to participate will be \$10.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION (2): Mr. MacDonald moved to adjourn the April 24, 2024 Brookside Farm Museum Meeting at 8:00 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Stazick. (3-0) Unanimous.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Frances Gheri, Recording Secretary**

March 2024 Curator's Report  
as of April 23, 2024

Christian Freeman Newspaper

- The proposal from the Northeast Document Conservation Center was approved and will be funded by the Friends of Brookside Farm Museum in the amount of \$4,000.

Collaboration with UConn School of Landscape Design

- Final Presentation: Scheduled for April 26th, 2 p.m. at UConn's Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture, Wilfred B. Young Building, University of Connecticut (YNG) 1376 Storrs Road, Unit 4067, Storrs, CT 06269. The presentation will feature juniors building upon sophomores' work. All are welcome to attend.

Will offer a student from the program a summer internship for \$1,000 (60 hours) to plan and host an educational program and begin establishing the native landscape that we pick as the one we wish to pursue.

Grants and Assessments

- Connecticut Humanities Assessment Grant: Hosted a site visit from consultant Nicole Besseghir to prepare for the collections assessment. Cheri Meier attended.
- Interpretive Plan Grant: Still waiting for a decision.
- Received notice that we will receive a grant from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut for \$15,000 to pursue the Homegrown National Park initiative. This grant will be run through the Town of East Lyme in consultation with Kevin Gervais. The plan is attached.\*
- Received notice that we did not receive the general operating grant that we applied for from the Community Foundation. This is completely fine as they know nothing about Brookside to date. The other grant will help us establish confidence in our organization from the Community Foundation and could result in a good deal of future funding.

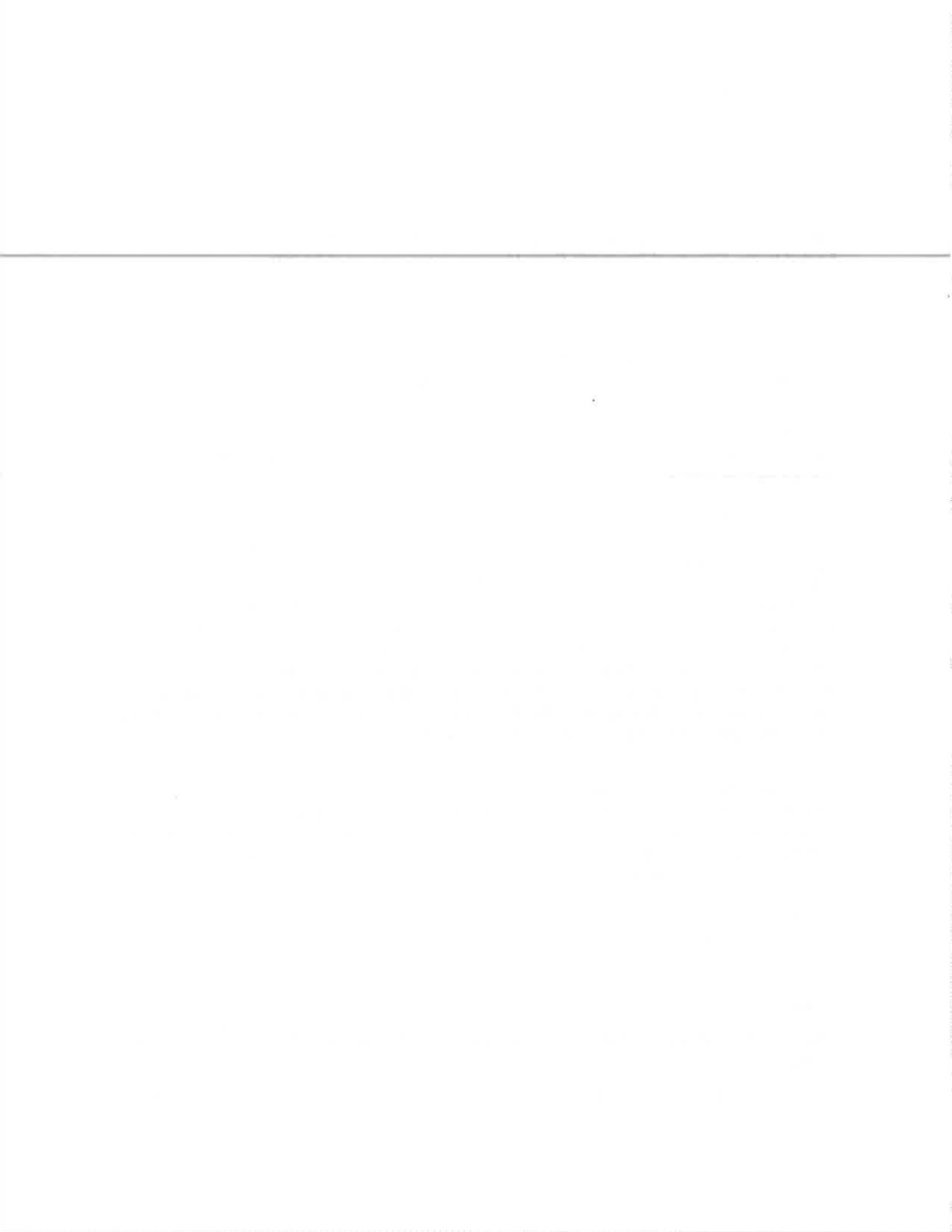
Homegrown National Park Initiative

- Book discussion has been published by the East Lyme Public Library.
- One volunteer has started to cut back and paint invasives in cooperation with the East Lyme Pollinator Pathway directly on the other side so the two will meet in the middle.
- Pursued additional volunteers at the UConn Extension's Master Gardener's Open House on April 23.
- Secured the commitment of Doug Tallamy to speak at the final book discussion group (virtually) on September 9.

- Misc:

Secured two dates for performances at the barn over the summer with the support of Jason Deeble.

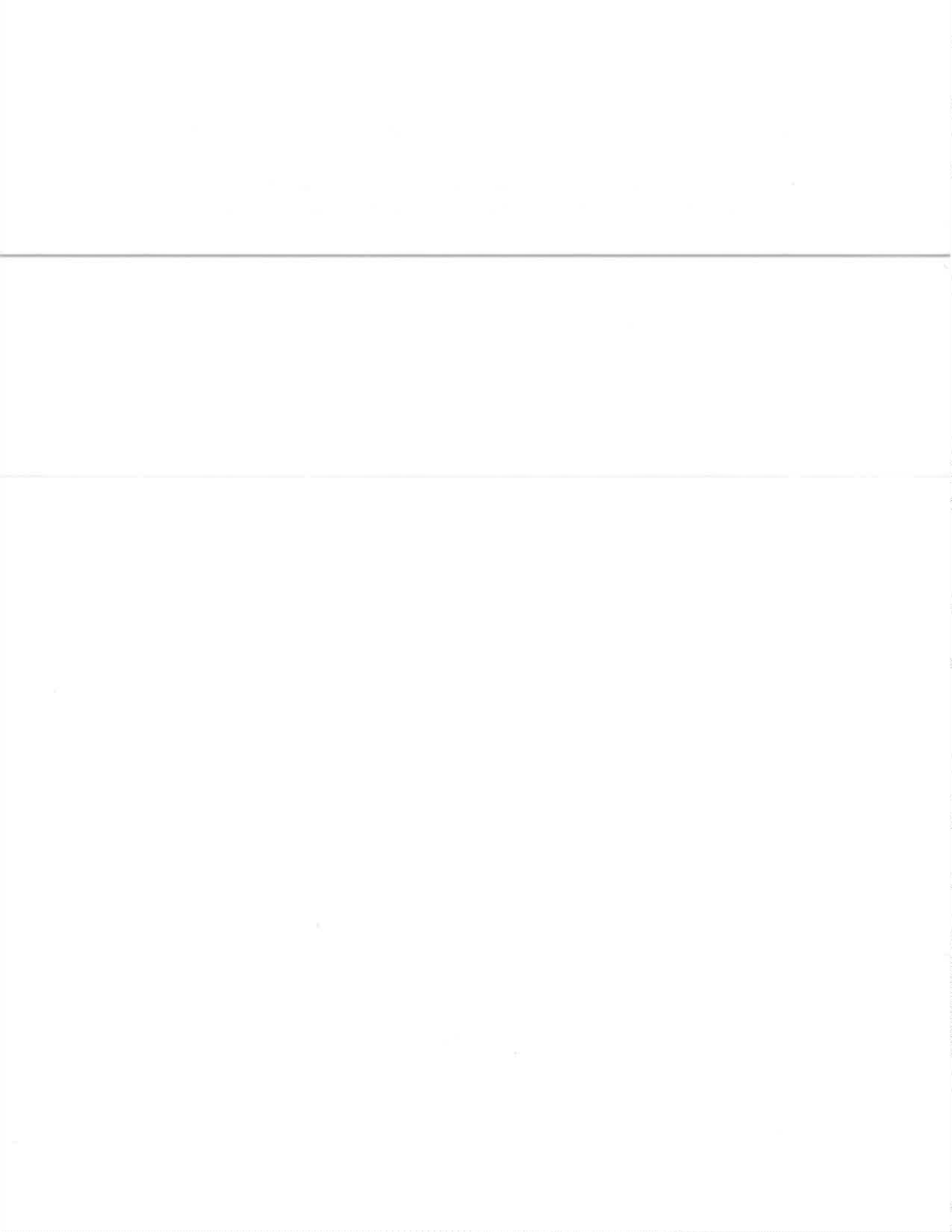
Created promotional materials for Friends events and created events on Facebook. Created the Stripe mechanism to accept online payments.



Security System Funding: Began funding the monthly subscription (\$4.99 per month) for the ring camera.

A main focus for May will be to begin the application to SHPO for the Historic Structures Report. The application doesn't open until August, but SHPO has agreed to review a draft application in advance.

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\*Brookside's Homegrown National Park Project

proposed budget 2024 (written with the expectation that we would receive \$10,000 for 2024)

Expenses Homegrown National Park Cofounder and staff to visit site \$ 5,000

Marketing and Publicity materials about the initiative \$ 2,500

Books for book club \$ 1,000

Materials for volunteer gatherings monthly \$ 1,200

Landscapers, paid labor to clear invasives \$ 5,000

Equipment (used) to clear that land of invasives \$ 1,000

Ten percent \$ 2,820

Staff and volunteer training Equipment to maintain early plantings Purchase native plants and trees

Part time staff salary (30%) \$ 7,500 (valued at/no actual cost)

Total \$ 26,020 Income

Town of East Lyme (subject to budget approval) \$ 9,510 (was not approved)

Friends of Brookside Farm Museum \$ 3,010 (value of volunteer work, no actual cost)

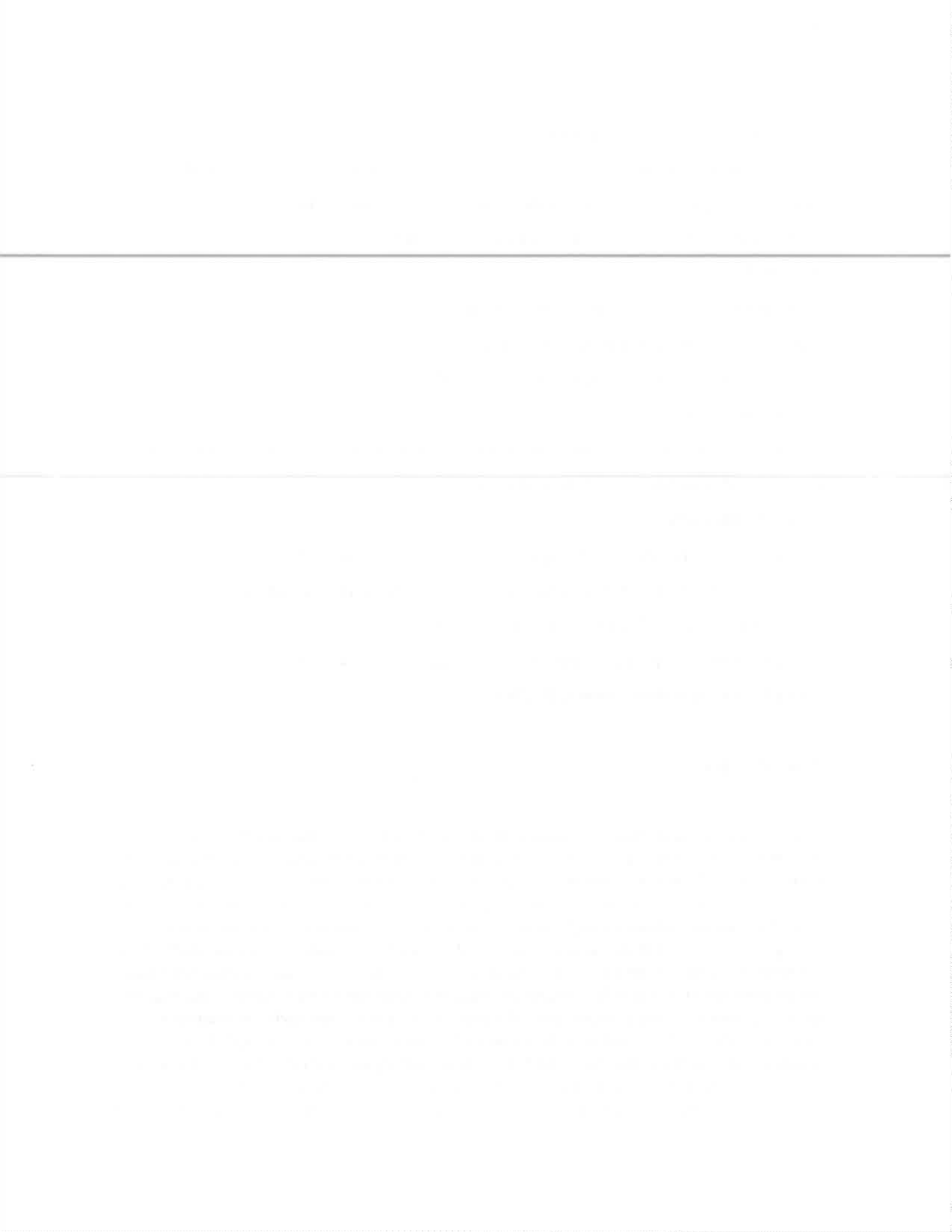
Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut \$ 10,000

East Lyme Public Library \$ 3,500 (value of volunteer support, no actual cost)

Total \$ 26,020 (actual dollars spent is \$15,000)

Project Description:

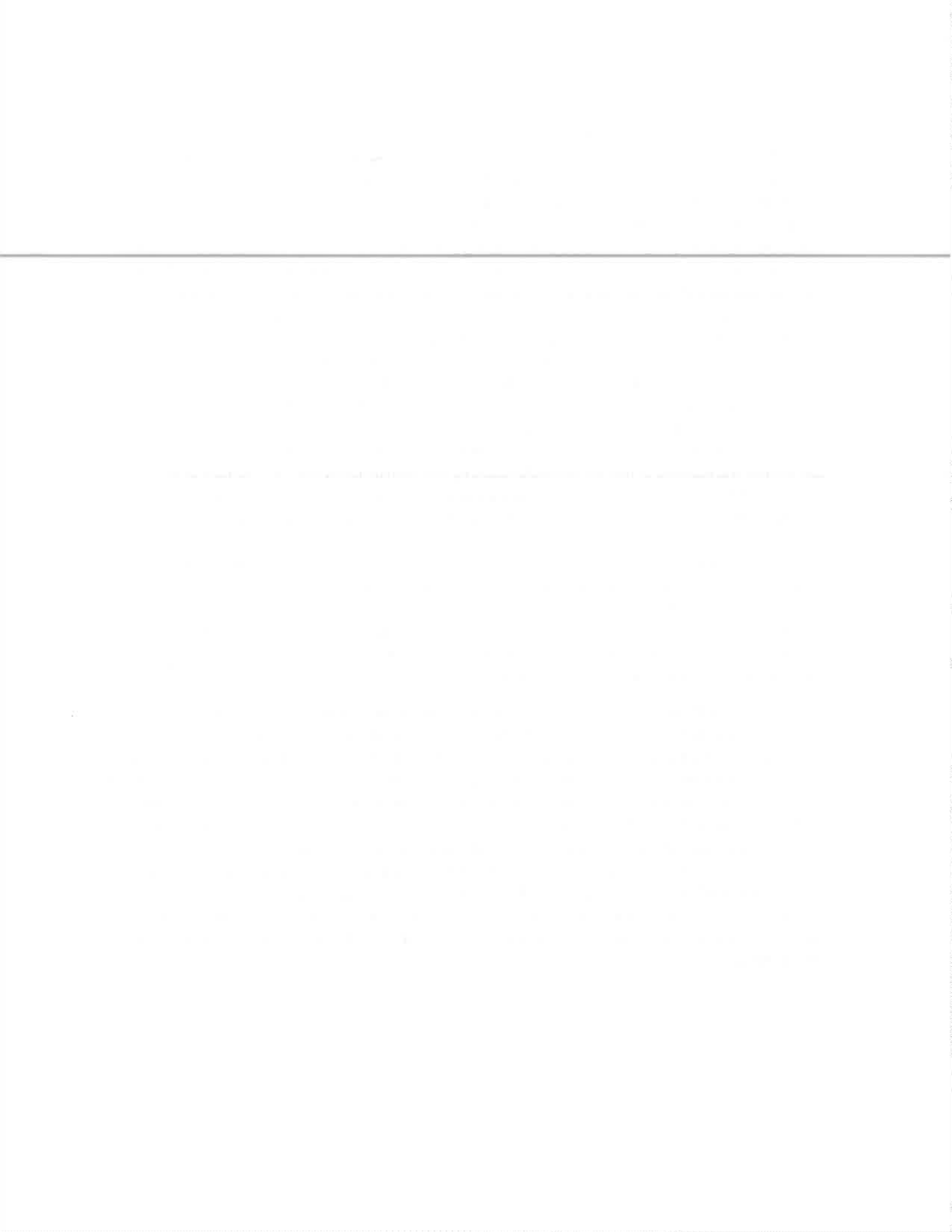
Project Description (excerpted from grant application)\* Describe the project for which you are requesting funding. What opportunities, needs, and/or problems will be addressed by your project? With the cooperation of the Town of East Lyme, the East Lyme Public Library, the East Lyme Pollinator Pathway, the Brookside Farm Museum intends to turn its property into a Homegrown National Park ([www.homegrownnationalpark.org](http://www.homegrownnationalpark.org)). We hope that this project extends into private properties throughout East Lyme and southeast Connecticut. The Brookside Farm Museum is a parcel of land on the National Register of Historic Places as the Thomas Avery House and has been owned by the Town of East Lyme since the mid-1970s. Despite a strong community undertaking to preserve the property and run it as a historic house museum over the years, it has experienced insufficient leadership, expertise, and resources to maintain the site and attract necessary visitors to support the site. It stands across from two of the town's public schools and directly adjacent to the Community Center. Both the Community Center and the Brookside property are treasures to the town of East Lyme and have the potential to serve as a cultural and environmental centerpiece for the town (literally located





in the Center of town closer to the Flanders end, versus downtown which is a tourist hub located along the south end of town on the shore). Currently both the Community Center and Brookside are dramatically overgrown and riddled with invasive species. The only part of the properties that have intentional natives is the small parcel that the East Lyme Pollinator Pathways maintain. At Brookside there are overgrown walking paths and a pond that used to be visible from a main road but which is now a swamp. Most people don't know the walking paths exist and those who do can't use it because it is overgrown with bramble. At the front of the Community Center is a parcel of land also riddled with invasive species and completely underutilized. The State of Connecticut's Green Plan has a strategy to protect specific lands capable of providing buffers to climate change, critical habitats, and recreational trails. Developing a Homegrown National Park on the Brookside Farm Museum property will support the goals of the State of Connecticut's Green Plan, which aims to increase urban parks, trails, and community gardens that increase the quality of life for residents in populated areas that tend to be farther from other existing open spaces. Environmental leaders in town, most specifically the East Lyme Pollinator Pathway have been making small strides toward increasing the town's commitment to improving its biodiversity. It has been successful at passing a zoning ordinance that allows only the planting of natives on newly acquired commercial properties. It is spreading its pathway and Brookside is on that path. Over six months of networking with community leaders including the now First Selectman Dan Cunningham, members of the East Lyme Agriculture Commission, the East Lyme Public Library (and the administrators of its site planning consultants), the Brookside Farm Museum Commission, the Historical Society, and others, have agreed that the improvement of the grounds and the importance of teaching about biodiversity is something everyone agrees upon and wants to be a part of. Using the Homegrown National Park strategy is easy to understand (1. Remove invasive species, 2. Plant and cultivate native species), and will increase the chances that all partners can work together to be successful and change the environment of East Lyme and the surrounding communities for the better.

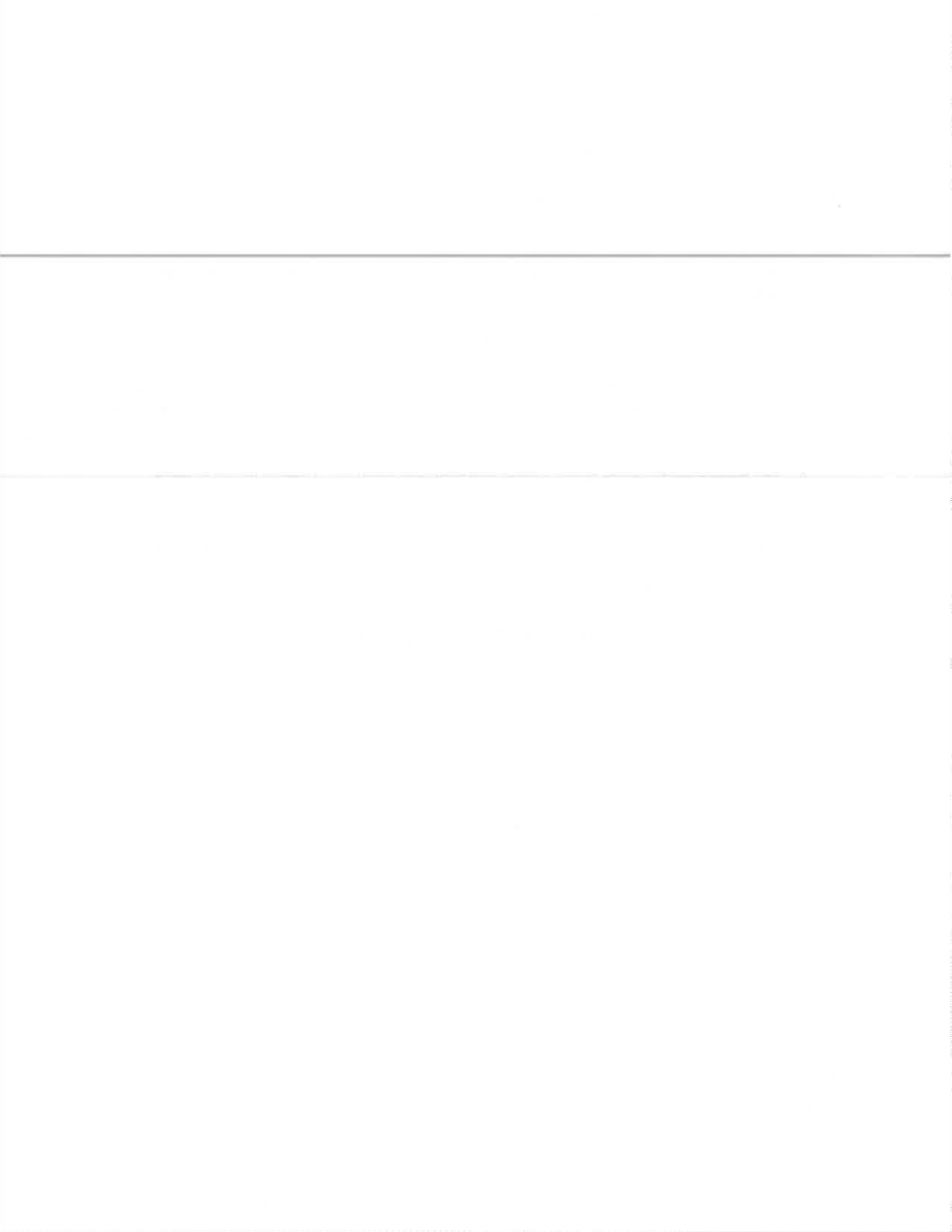
The Homegrown National Park will improve the environment, reduce pollution, and bring back essential insects including butterflies and fireflies (being the centerpiece insect of the movement although there will be many more) for a 40+ acre swath of land directly in the center of town and just south of a congested highway and north of the Long Island Sound. To our knowledge, there is no other publicly owned Homegrown National Park in Connecticut. The Avon Public Library has hosted book clubs and founder Doug Tallamy for free webinars. Still, they are not tracking actual Homegrown National Park sites and the volume of acreage that is being transformed (which Brookside will). Establishing a Homegrown National Park should not be costly. Individuals who put their property on the map and work toward accomplishing their goals do it with their personal funds. As an institution that is becoming a Homegrown National Park, the costs are greater because the size of the property is larger, personal funds cannot be used, a salary must be paid, and other fundraising mechanisms must be established.



Chairman's Report  
April 24 Commission Meeting

Please read the following report before the April 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. If there are questions, I'll answer them at the meeting.

1. Ron Bence has installed a ring camera and a trail camera to discourage property damage.
2. A second hole in the roof above the kitchen area was patched by Ron Bence
3. I emailed RoseAnn Hardy about needing 3 more Commissioners because having only 4 is problematic when it comes to voting and a quorum is such a small number (3) of us. No response yet.
4. Wil Reed's archeology class visited the property April 4<sup>th</sup>. They're going to work around the ice pond where they were last Fall.
5. We did more work on organizing and cleaning out extraneous items from the attic. At some point soon, we can safely eliminate more after the collections professional visits us.
6. A padlock has been put on the garden shed behind the barn.



Range of Accounts: 01-01-134- - to 01-01-134-999-999 Include Cap Accounts: Yes As Of: 04/15/24  
Skip Zero Activity: Yes

NOTE: This report includes ONLY activity originally Budgeted/Charged to Budget Year 4.  
Prior Year Budgeted/Encumbered/Payable amounts rolled to Budget Year 4 have been EXCLUDED.

Account No	Description	Budgeted	Transfers	Encumber	Net Expd/Reimb	Payable	Balance YTD	%Used
01-01-134-000-000	Brookside Farm Museum Commission							
01-01-134-100-000	Personnel Services							
01-01-134-100-412	PT Clerical	600.00	0.00	0.00	465.48	0.00	134.52	78
01-01-134-100-415	Curator	6,180.00	19,500.00	0.00	19,082.14	0.00	6,597.86	74
01-01-134-200-000	Services - Contracted/Operatio							
01-01-134-200-222	Building Maintenance	1,000.00	0.00	923.77	76.23	0.00	0.00	100
01-01-134-200-225	Landscaping Maintenance	360.00	0.00	0.40	359.60	0.00	0.00	100
01-01-134-200-236	Museum Programs	2,000.00	0.00	1,886.12	113.88	0.00	0.00	100
01-01-134-200-257	Preservation, Collections Care	500.00	0.00	324.28	175.72	0.00	0.00	100
01-01-134-300-000	Operating Exp - Supplies/Fuels							
01-01-134-300-200	Communications							
01-01-134-300-201	Telephone	1,000.00	0.00	46.13	783.19	0.00	170.68	83
Control: 200	Total	1,000.00	0.00	46.13	783.19	0.00	170.68	83
01-01-134-300-300	Supplies & Miscellaneous							
01-01-134-300-320	Misc Supplies	300.00	0.00	141.07	158.93	0.00	0.00	100
Control: 300	Total	300.00	0.00	141.07	158.93	0.00	0.00	100
01-01-134-400-210	Utilities	5,000.00	0.00	281.43	2,527.93	0.00	2,190.64	56
Fund: 01	GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES Budgeted Total	16,940.00	19,500.00	3,603.20	23,743.10	0.00	9,093.70	75
Fund: 01	GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES Non-Budgeted Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Fund: 01	GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES Total	16,940.00	19,500.00	3,603.20	23,743.10	0.00	9,093.70	75
Final Budgeted		16,940.00	19,500.00	3,603.20	23,743.10	0.00	9,093.70	75
Final Non-Budgeted		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Final Total		16,940.00	19,500.00	3,603.20	23,743.10	0.00	9,093.70	75

