

WILLOWSFORD CONSERVANCY
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
March 15, 2018

Minutes

Attending: Mark Trostle, Mary Hegedus, Stacey Kessinger, Claudette Papathanasopoulous – Trustees; Iris Gestram – Executive Director

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:31pm.

Approval of Agenda: Mark moved to approve the agenda. Stacey seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Minutes: Mark moved to approve the minutes from January 15, 2018. Mary seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

New Business:

Farm Transition: Iris updated the board on candidates for the Farm Manager position and the status of the current vegetable and livestock production as well as the opportunity and process to hire seasonal labor. From an operations perspective Iris is confident the current staff can handle the workload with seasonal labor until the Conservancy hires a replacement for the Farm Manager position. The retail side of operations will be managed by Retail Manager Deb Dramby with support from seasonal Assistant Retail Managers.

Executive Director Report:

Community-wide Meetings: In February, residents were invited to participate in four Conservancy information meetings (one for each village) for updates on Conservancy activities, and on the longer-term vision for Conservancy operations and how they support the Willowsford community, and related resident assessments. Presentations by Conservancy ED, Iris Gestram, and Board Chair, Mark Trostle, were followed by resident questions and suggestions.

Conservancy Trail Signage Improvement Plan: The Conservancy has initiated phase 1 of our Trail Signage Improvement Plan continue to provide residents with positive trail experiences and easy navigation of the Conservancy's nature trail system. Phase 1 improvements in 2018 will include:

- Adding of trail indicator arrows on all trail markers to make markers two-directional (approx. 350 trail markers)
- Additional trail markers at trail connector points for improved way-finding
- Improving information at Trails Kiosks
- Streamlining of temporary trail closure and construction signage
- New junction signs at trail junctions for improved wayfinding
- Landmark signs to mark significant features along the trail (i.e., buildings, points of interest)

- Blazing of trails with colored paint for improved wayfinding.

Resident Archery Club: The Conservancy is working with residents on forming the Willowsford Archery Club. Governing documents are being finalized. The club name and logo have been created, along with a graphic standard manual for logo and name use. A Use Agreement between the Conservancy and the Club will define the club's use of the Archery Range.

Archery Range Project Update: Construction of the range pavilion and storage shed is underway for the 10-lane target archery range in the southern part of The Greens. Target building and installation, signage and fencing will follow in April. The Conservancy and Club are planning a Range Opening event, tentatively for May 19.

Cedar Pond Pavilion Project Update: Pavilion construction is underway. The timber frame was erected in early March. The roof and deck are being built, followed by wood staining and interior build-out. The Conservancy has set a tentative date for an opening event for May 19, celebrating the Pavilion opening in partnership with the Willowsford Social Club.

Grange Farm Stand & Garden Renovations Project Update: To better serve Farm Stand customers and visitors, the Conservancy is making improvements at the Grange Farm Stand and surrounding garden in March and April. For safety and convenience, off-street parking is being added at the lower end of the garden, and lighting is added to the parking area, garden and near the Farm Stand. More space is being created for the food truck, nearby picnic tables and general gathering space.

Hidden Meadow Event Field Project Update: Construction has begun on the Greens event field. The project is slated for completion in fall of 2018.

Farm Tenant House Project Update: A dry-wall inspection was recently completed, and the quality of construction and progress are both positive.

Farm Packing Shed Improvements Project Update: Planning and design has been completed to improve produce storage and packing areas at the Grange Farm. Cost-estimating and construction will follow March through May.

2018 Mowing & Bush Hogging: The Conservancy has purchased mowing equipment to bring bi-weekly trail mowing in-house for better quality control. Bush hogging of natural areas will continue to be contracted out. For the 2018 season, Visual Edge, Inc. of Aldie, VA, has been contracted to perform the work.

2018 Habitat Restoration Projects include three riparian plantings to restore tree cover in riparian areas in The Greens and Grant; a meadow restoration with native warm-season grasses in The Greens, and restoration of a former sod field to pine forest in The Grange. Riparian plantings will be supported through grants from the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District. Initial planting is expected to be completed by May 1.

Volunteer Program: Under the stewardship of Mark A. the program has grown in both participants and activity.

Conservancy Vehicle Branding: Conservancy pick-up trucks will be branded with the Willowsford Conservancy logo by April, for field recognition and added security. Mark Trostle asked to remind the Conservancy field staff to identify themselves in the field as Conservancy staff, engage with residents, and remind non-residents that Willowsford trails and open space are private property.

2018 PROGRAMS & EVENTS

- Feb. 13-April 4: Landscape for Life, 6-sessions; The Grange, 13 students
- March 17: Willowsford Wildlife - Beavers at Work nature walk w. Ranger Andrew, The Greens – sold out
- March 18: Amphibian Walk with Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, Mike Hayslett, The Greens
- April 7: Snags: How Dead Trees Help Wildlife, Kevin Rose, DVGIF, The Grange
- April 12: Tick Ecology Lecture, Ron Circe, The Grange
- April 21: Monarch Butterflies and Milkweed Terrariums workshop & nature walk w. Ranger Mark, The Grange - sold out
- April 21: Greens Wetlands Tour for Willowsford Social Club
- April 22: Community-wide Cleanup in partnership with HOA
- April 26: Voices in the Night Amphibian Walk, Kevin Rose, VDGIF, The Grange
- May 19: Opening Event for the Archery Range and Cedar Pond Pavilion with the Willowsford Archery Club and Willowsford Social Club, The Greens
- June 18, 20 & 22: Discover Summer Camp, The Grange
- June 25-29: Lost & Found Nature Exploration Summer Camp, The Greens
- July 23-27: Lost & Found Nature Exploration Summer Camp, The Grange
- Sept. 22: Adventure Enablers Trail Mix Races, The Greens
- Sept. 23: Adventure Enablers Tenderfoot Race, The Greens
- Sept. 29: Community Bonfire & Camp-over, The Greens

Next Meeting Date: May 15, 2018 at 4:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 5:28 pm.