

WILLOWSFORD CONSERVANCY
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
February 12, 2019

Minutes

Attending: Chris Bodley, Mary Hegedus, Claudette Papathanasopoulous, Mark Trostle, Rick DiBella, Stacey Kessinger, - Trustees; Iris Gestram, Executive Director, Ashley Swenson, Retail Manager, and Patrick Boleman, Land Stewardship Manager. Absent, Stan Settle.

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

Approval of Agenda: Motion passed 6-0.

Minutes: Iris provided the Board with a few text edits from the previous meeting. The minutes were then approved. Motion passed 6-0.

New Business:

- Appointment of Treasurer
 - o Mary Hegedus was appointed Treasurer by unanimous approval.
- Internal Procurement Policy
 - o Procurement Policy was adopted by the Board.
- 2018 Smithsonian Deer Impact Study Report
 - o Copies of the report were provided to the board for preview.
 - o The deer population at Willowsford is still very high and increasing; this can be explained by continued internal construction as well as location of the community. Due to decreasing open space in the surrounding area, deer may be migrating to Willowsford open space.
 - o Iris plans to bring updated deer management program recommendations to the Board in the upcoming months.
- Trail Application Demonstration
 - o Patrick provided an overview of the Conservancy Trail App that is to be launched in March for the Grange and Grant, followed in summer by the Greens and Grove. The app content and maps were developed in-house by Patrick and Claudette. User log-ins will be provided to Willowsford residents when the app launches, and residents can participate in a training session/app trail walk in each village.

Old Business: None

Executive Director Report:

- Hiring update:
 - o The Conservancy welcomes Karen Siler as Business Operations Manager, starting February 4. Karen held prior positions of Controller, Financial Analyst, and Accountant for larger companies, including Digitek and Verizon, as well as

- small companies and brings experience in financial management, accounting, and business management.
 - Hiring is still underway for the Landscape Maintenance Technician position. The job market for this type of position is very competitive. Two candidates declined the offered position. Interviews continue.
 - Field Operations Manager Mark Ahlijanian submitted his resignation effective March 15. Mark will be moving to Colorado. The Conservancy plans to refill the position. Land Stewardship Manager Patrick Boleman will take on added responsibilities in the interim.
- HR, Benefits and Payroll Changeover
 - The switch from developer-provided services to a Conservancy contract with Paychex to provide payroll, benefits and HR services is nearing completion. Payroll and benefits, and a portion of HR services began Jan. 1. Additional HR functions (employee handbook, safety program, etc.) are being developed. LTD insurance options are being explored. HR, payroll and benefits will be managed by the Conservancy ED with support from the Business Operations Manager.
- 2018-2019 Deer Management Program
 - The program had a successful season with 61 deer taken, including 31 deer in The Grant; 26 in The Greens; and 4 during special nuisance animal removal at the Grange vegetable farm as regulated by VDGIF. About 1/3 of the harvest (20 deer) was accomplished using archery.
 - The program's focus on reducing the deer population and deer over-browsing of forest areas on Conservancy open space was maintained with a high ratio of antlerless deer: 53 out of 61 deer (87%).
 - Shortening of the archery season and expanding opportunities for firearms hunting, improved scheduling of hunting days, and targeted zone assignments for hunters were successful strategies that resulted in higher deer take.
 - Fifty-four deer (89%) were taken by 8 hunters. To continue improving the effectiveness of the program and maintaining the focus on deer population management, more emphasis will be placed on a proven, recent track record in taking antlerless deer when selecting new and returning hunters because the Conservancy deer management program is not intended to provide recreational hunting opportunities.
 - Updated program guidelines will be provided in spring.
- Rt. 50 Farm Market Update
 - Planning for a potential Farm Market near the intersection of Rt. 50 and Everfield Drive continues. Willowsford Conservancy and the Developer are in discussion with potential partners for a joint venture in providing farm related retail operations as well as food service options to the extent permitted by LC Zoning. Planning concepts and the potential for a septic system are being explored.

- Farm, CSA & Retail (Ashley Swensen):
 - o 2019 CSA

Share Type	Current Subscription	Subscription Goal
Vegetables	49	300
Pastured Meats	6	30
Milks	12	40
Eggs	38	200
Flowers	8	50

- o Upcoming Marketing Outreach includes a Direct Mailer, print ads, Willowsford e-blasts, and social media outreach. Ashley shared examples of each.
 - o The Farm switched to the Harvie software platform. Harvie utilizes a proprietary algorithm using preferences by each member to create custom shares based on the farm's weekly harvest. Members may also log in to online accounts to view shares, make changes, and add extra items before pickup dates, resulting in average increased sales of 5%+ per week. Harvie integrates customer service and marketing options.
 - o Organic Certification: The Farm has submitted a completed application to CCOF for organic certification in 2019.
 - o Chefscape Indoor Market: EatLoCo has founded a new, indoor farmer's market in Leesburg that includes exhibition kitchens and caters to local chefs as well as traditional farmer's market shoppers. Willowsford Farm will be one of only two vegetable producers in the new market, which opens in March.
 - o Heritage Hunt CSA Location: The Farm will be presenting to the HOA and residents of Heritage Hunt community in Gainesville on March 26 to promote a new CSA partnership and drop site. Vegetable and egg shares will be available at a community location hosted by Heritage Hunt, schedule TBA, pending minimum sign-up of 30 members.
 - o Upcoming Farm Programming and Education include a Farm Tour and CSA Q&A on March 17; the Feathered Fosters program April 27 - May 4; and Farm Summer Camp July 22 - 26.
 - o Farm Garden Improvements: The Farm Garden is being renovated to replace degraded bed borders and reduce maintenance costs while supporting increased foot traffic, shopping duration and events/marketing potential. U-Pick beds and cut flowers are being replaced by seating, a play area, open space for event rentals, and farm production beds. Native plants beds will be transplanted and expanded, and berry brambles will remain. Shade trees will be added. The design will enhance the space for both shoppers and future programming, including vendor tastings, visiting animals, a more frequent food truck presence, and summer camp. The walkway into the farm cultivation space will also be preserved, allowing for continued visitor engagement.
- Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, March 26 at 4:30 pm.
 - Meeting adjourned by Mark Trostle at 6:12 pm