

**Willowsford Conservancy  
Board of Trustees Meeting – March 8, 2022**

**The Boat House and via Zoom**

**Attendance**

Board members: Chase Rowan, Claudette Papathanasopoulos, Greg Licamele, Karyn Moreland, Jake Virag, Avi Sareen

Staff: Andy Dunham, Taryn McFarland, Mel Dunham, Gabe Concordia, Jamie McArdle, Jim Landfield

**I. Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 5:35 p.m.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from January approved without dissent.

**III. Resident Forum**

One resident participated in the Resident Forum via Zoom and provided an update on the NOVEC substation project in The Grange.

**IV. Staff Updates**

Utilizing a new way to provide updates and discussion, staff walked through this briefing book:

<https://willowsfordconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Agenda-3-8-2022.pdf>

Additional description and details:

**1. Farm Update – Andy Dunham**

Focal points for the farm established in July 2021: Soil, operational efficiencies and community engagement.

**a. Soil Health**

- i. Sorghum adds carbon to the soil, smothers weeds, etc. Building health and reducing weed pressure will open up options moving forward. Lawn is more fertile than the garden. Increased soil fertility expected in next 2-3 years. Use soil tests to measure organic matter to see what changes over time.

**b. Improve Operational Efficiencies**

- i. Need to ensure everything we do has a high rate of success. In near term leverage best practices and expand opportunities as operation/soil are in better shape.
- ii. 2021 winter CSA shares – same sales volume, half the delivery hours which allowed staff to address deferred maintenance concerns. A good example is the cleared Grange Farm fence.
- iii. Irrigation – outsourced irrigation contractor blew out lines, brass gate valve nearly hit their staff in the head. Reduce risk by maintaining two of the seven irrigation lines – and replacing fittings in remaining two.
- iv. New delivery truck – more in line with standard home delivery vehicles. Challenging to find driver due to old trucks size, easier to staff with the new truck.
- v. Selling equipment – to improve efficiencies and increase quality of life for the staff. Should be cash neutral with sales to purchase of items.

- vi. Deferred capital cooler project due to timing/strategic plan. Look at the needs of the Farm overall.
- vii. Track our success through financials and engagement data.
- c. **Community Engagement**
  - i. Feedback from residents is that they'd like more opportunities to interact with the Farm. We've created multiple ways to reach out to gauge community reception.
- d. **2022 CSA Sales**
  - i. Launched January 28, 2022, prior year sales launched Dec. 3, 2021

## 2. Land Stewardship – Taryn McFarland

- a. **Trail Maintenance** – started again on Pinewoods Loop, have made significant progress. We've completed the most difficult aspects of the work, ADA component, to make trail more accessible to all residents.
  - i. **Trail Survey** – 40 miles, inspected each to prioritize the maintenance for the 2022 season.
  - ii. **Volunteer trail dates – mountain biking** - March 19 and April 22. First day is training on trail maintenance. Second day is creating mountain biking feature. All are welcome to assist with trail maintenance.
- b. **Pond Repairs** – some ponds need significant work. Dams were not included in 2021 reserve study. See briefing book for details. Board needs to make decision on how to move forward.
- c. **Beaver Removal** – Beavers removed at Twin Ponds. Avi added beavers are necessary part of the ecosystem, they will continue to come back. Young beavers typically move upstream – they also have large home ranges. Should look for another location that might be a good habitat within our space to lure them out of the areas we do not want them.
- d. **Tenant Houses** – Until 2021, we put band aids on these structures, but there are additional issues that need to be addressed. Tenant houses are critical to maintain for employees that need it in our expensive area.
- e. **Future Projects**
  - i. April 16 tree planting on Paddock Gate Place. Grant funding has been received to cover cost of the project, need volunteers to help plant.
  - ii. NOVEC – application for substation in The Grange has been accepted for processing by Loudoun County; awaiting county and NOVEC decision points, which could then activate the Conservancy's narrow focus of work to plant tree buffer.
  - iii. Loudoun County Public Schools is seeking an easement in The Grant for a new middle school. Staff has asked LCPS to shift easement west to reduce risk of tree loss. Staff has asked for \$4800 to cover our lost tree cover.
  - iv. Deer Management – 2022/23 – shifting schedule to make sure residents have a greater period of time to access trails. Some deer hunts will now be from Mondays at noon to Fridays at noon. Also establishing a youth hunt week – in line with regulations and encourages younger people to continue the education for the next generation. Youth must be accompanied by adult/parent for entirety of hunt.

### **3. Marketing**

- a. Communications
  - i. Developing new plan
- b. Back End Logistics
  - i. New website in development, launches early April. Current site had not been maintained and posed a security risk. Goal is to have a secure site that is more user friendly.
  - ii. Jake is helping with footage
- c. Marketing
  - i. Farm CSA software change from Harvie to B2D to reduce expense
- d. Strategic Engagement
  - i. Adding programs, grateful for community members that have come forward to volunteer and assist with programming

### **4. Financials – Chase, Jim, Jamie**

- a. Audit will be ready in mid-March.
- b. 2021 Year End update presented with budget.
- c. So far in 2022, transfer fees from resale homes are below budget. Resales are lower in the early part of a year versus the height of the summer. It's likely we will even out for an overall year figure.
- d. Payroll underbudget due to billets unfilled. Land Stewardship team did hire for two open positions.
- e. 2022 Budget Impacts
  - i. Ann Taylor, who joined Willowsford Conservancy as its second executive director beginning in November 2021, recently resigned. The Board will soon hire an interim executive director to help facilitate day-to-day operations. The Board will then resume the strategic planning process that began last summer to identify a clear path forward for our collective Conservancy now that we have grown from the founding vision. This strategic plan work will inform the selection of the next full-time executive director.
  - ii. Accounting moving forward – looking through processes and procedures to make sure we're in-step and to leverage the accounting system to provide the teams with the information they need to make the best decisions for their department.