

# **SNAKE DEN FARM ASSOCIATION**

## **REGULAR MEETING**

Tuesday, March 03, 2020, 5:00pm

Mohr Public Library

1 Memorial Ave, Johnston, RI

### **MINUTES**

- I. **Call to Order & Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 5:03pm.

Attending: Rebecca Roberts (chair), Jeroen Koeman (member), Nathaniel Wood (member), Adam Graffunder (treasurer), Mark Ducharme (citizen participant), Marina Capraro (secretary)

Absent with notice: Lia Yang (co-chair), Marc Paulhaus (member)

- II. **Agenda Addendum:** A motion was made to add the following items to the agenda: Secretary update from DEM Parks property walk through on 03/02 and a discussion of cooperative improvements and projects; motion seconded; all in favor; motion passed.
- III. **Citizen's Participation [limited to five (5) minutes per speaker for an accumulated time of no more than 30 minutes – unless extended by a majority vote of the members]:** A motion was made to suspend the rules involving citizen participants' involvement; motion seconded; all in favor; motion passed.
- IV. **Adoption of Minutes- review/discussion/action**
- A. **First Meeting- January 24, 2020:** Minutes were reviewed and discussed by all members and participants; no edits to the minutes were proposed. A motion was made to adopt the minutes of the January 24<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting; motion seconded; all in favor; motion passed.
- V. **General Business- review/discussion/action**
- A. **Edits to the Snake Den Farmer's Operation Manual:** Secretary provided a draft with the edited sections of SDF Operation Manual, including all edits entered into the "working document" as of 03/01 at 12:00pm. All farm entities were directed to review and comment upon the changes. This discussion will continue via email among farm entities and farm manager until a final draft is agreed upon. Secretary mentioned the need to further edit the "Premises Maintenance" section after a discussion with DEM Parks. See *Secretary Update from DEM Parks Walkthrough* below.

- B. NRCS:** Chair reported on meeting with NRCS and a discussion ensued about the potential conservation practices SDFFA could apply for. The group decided that the highest priority is becoming eligible and fully setting up the entity with the Farm Service Agency, so that future applications will happen with more ease. A motion was made to allow those with signature authority to establish a FSA/NRCS account on behalf of the SDFFA, for future applications; motion seconded; all in favor; motion passed.
- C. Filing timeline:** Secretary reported that the non-profit organization papers needed for the state to identify the SDFFA as an entity were filed with the secretary of state on 03/02. We must wait for the SOS website to populate with the SDFFA information. This information is crucial in order to go forward with our planned initiatives such as NRCS and the establishment of a bank account. Secretary will be diligent about monitoring SOS website for updates, and will provide co-chair and treasurer with the proper documents when they become available. Secretary will also inform all SDFFA members via email when non-profit status is active.
- D. Membership fee due dates (\$75 electric plug in fee):** The establishment of a bank account is not possible until SDFFA has verification of its non-profit status from SOS. As soon as this information is available secretary/treasurer/chair will coordinate on the establishment of a bank account and the prompt transfer of the barn's electric bill from NRICD to SDFFA. Secretary reported the successful re-designation of the barn's status with National Grid from "residential" to "commercial"; this will allow SDFFA to access lower electric rates going forward. Treasurer/chair will need to organize member entities (those whom received the \$75 reduction in their 2020 invoice: Basil, Wicked Tulips, Foggy Notion, and Endless) to pay the \$75 membership due into the SDFFA account and implement a procedure for each farm to meter and report their electrical use.
- VI. **NRICD Board Meeting Report from Secretary:** Secretary reported that Marc of Cucumber Hill Farm made a request to the NRICD Board at the 02/18 meeting to expand his hay operation in Field 2. The NRICD board voted to approve his request. He will be taking on the large task of cleaning up Field 2 and converting it into high-quality hay to feed his cattle. Additionally, the board discussed the current status of the Bond-funded improvements due to take place at SDF, and the virtual stand-still that NRICD has reached with DEM Ag and DEM Planning over the feasibility of a FSMA-compliant washroom. The NRICD board decided to draft a letter to DEM stating NRICD's inability to continue to fund staff time for proposals that are continuously turned down by DEM.

**VII. Other Items**

**A. Bond Update provided by Kate Sayles:** Due to time constraints, secretary was unable to provide a hard-copy of the Bond Updates at the SDFA meeting. These updates were emailed to all farm entities on 03/03.

**B. \*Agenda Addendum- Secretary Update from DEM Parks Walkthrough:** The DEM Parks staff and our main POC at DEM, Bill Mitchell, met with Marina and Mark at the Brown Ave property on 03/02. This walkthrough is a part of the new contract management agreement between NRICD and DEM, which requires a yearly walkthrough. DEM asked that all unregistered vehicles be registered (state statute prohibits unregistered vehicles on state property). They asked farmers/farm manager to provide an on-season and off-season storage and field cleanliness policy to be reviewed and approved by DEM Parks. They are happy with the state of the house. DEM Parks will be hiring a pest control company to address powder-post beetle damage in barn and rodent control in house. They are willing to pay for a dumpster to be delivered to SDF to clean up debris and unused/unclaimed farming materials in barn/sheds.

**C. \*Agenda Addendum- Cooperative Improvements and Projects:** The group discussed cooperative investments in infrastructure and Foggy Notion Farm and Basil Farm are requesting financial assistance for minor road repairs on the road leading to their farms. Wicked Tulips will be providing equipment and labor towards the project, and FNF/Basil have cooperatively invested approximately \$700 to assist with the roads impassable condition moving into the spring. They are requesting that NRICD expend the cost for additional materials to assist with this improvement. Given the stalled and uncertain future of the bond funding, and an even longer timeline for implementation of bond-funded road repairs, farm manager supports this expenditure, and it was agreed that this proposal will be presented to the NRICD 03/10 Board Meeting. Foggy Notion will provide quotes and totals of time and money invested into the road thus far as supporting material for NRICD Board consideration.

**VIII. Schedule Next Meeting- Regular Meeting- Action Items:** Next SDFA Regular Meeting remains unscheduled until all farm entities can agree upon a time/date via email.

**IX. Adjournment:** A motion was made to adjourn the meeting; motion seconded; all in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 6:47pm.