

Shutesbury Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

4:00, Zoom

Meeting begun: 4:00

Present: Barbara Bigelow, Ann Brigham, Christine Marglin (taking minutes), Elaine Puleo, BZ Reily, Christine Robinson

Guest: Brian Giggey joined at 4:30

Approval of minutes from March 28 meeting

Agenda:

1. Recap of visit to Jefferson's Safe Haven (Barbara & Christine R.)
2. Updates on Brian Colleran and Ancient Pony Farm (Barbara)
3. What planning needs to be done for **Field Day on June 17** (all)

Can someone confirm this? When we met we said June 10 with a rain date of June 17 but as I recall Steven said June 10 wouldn't work. If we had written confirmation of the date but I can't find it.

If it is June 17, will we have a rain date?

4. Unspent \$250. Make a decision about how this will be spent. We considered field day. Are there \$250 of things/services that we could expense? If not, where else might we expense it? (all)
5. New members. I sent the request to the Select Board on 3/23 and have not yet heard back. I am about to send out a follow-up so hopefully we'll have some information by the meeting.
6. Getting funding for an outdoor pickleball court. Brian Giggey will join us at 4:30. If we're using CPC funds, the soonest we'd be able to submit a proposal is December 2023 and the soonest we would be allocated money is June 2024 ... Long time horizon.

1. **Jefferson Safe Haven:** On Saturday, April 15, the Recreation Committee sponsored a trip to Jefferson's Safe Haven in Leverett. Kathy and Trish, the sisters who own and operate the farm with the help of wonderful volunteers, explained how they started the Sanctuary and ultimately came to Leverett. We met the animals, among them Patches (an alpaca), Wilbur (a goat), and Peanut (a chicken), and learned how they came to find their forever home at Jefferson's Safe Haven. Kathy and Trish provided vegetables for those who wanted to feed the animals and popcorn for the visitors. The

day provided us with the opportunity both to learn about this very special place and to see old friends and make new ones. If you'd like to learn more about the sanctuary, go to jeffersonssafehaven.org.

2. Recap of Invasive plant workshop on May 13 and Ancient Ponies Farm visit on May 27

a. **Invasive Plant workshop:** Our next event will be on **May 13 from 10-12** and will be led by Brian Colleran, an expert on invasive plant management. We will meet at the Shutesbury Elementary School because there are three types of invasive plants growing there: Japanese Knotweed, bittersweet, and burning bush. With his help we will learn how to identify these invasives and how to eradicate them. The photo is of Japanese Knotweed. While its lushness may be appealing, it quickly excludes native plants, depriving bugs of their vital food sources and in turn depriving birds of theirs.

b. **Ancient Pony Farms:** On **Saturday, May 27, from 10-12** please join us at Ancient Pony Farms. Based on the success of last year's visit we have asked to return and Zoe Weizenbaum, Farm Manager, has welcomed us again. For adults, you'll have the opportunity to learn about her farming methods. And for adults and children, you'll have the opportunity to meet the soon to be born baby goats.

3. Planning for Family Field Day

4. Unspent money

5. New Members

6. **Pickleball (Guest Brian Giggey)**

a. Indoor pickleball will end on April 30. It has been a great success. I suggest that we keep it going as separate from the Rec Committee. It is easily managed by non-members. Recommend the committee promotes it when it starts up again next year.

b. Outdoor pickleball. Two issues:

i. Location – the sound of the ball being hit is loud and repetitive. In locating, courts either need to be sited some distance from homes or there needs to be a noise blocking barrier

ii. Funding - Assuming an appropriate site can be located, should apply for CPC funds.

. Recap of Invasive plant workshop on May 13 and Ancient Ponies Farm visit on May 27.

4. Planning for Family Field Day

5. Unspent money

6. New members

7. Funding for an outdoor pickleball court

Barbara and Christine R attended the Jefferson Safe Haven event where Barbara met some of her own daughter's old friends (alpacas). About twenty people attended, and it was very nice, interesting, laid back. Christine R was touched and moved by the story of the haven and appreciated the two sisters' ability to communicate about the happy place for animals they have created and the healing experience for some people of interacting with the animals.

Next two events: invasive plants workshop, and Ancient Ponies farm visit, both cosponsored by the library and so promoted by the library. Invasive Plants: Saturday, May 13 10-12 at SES gym, where there are three kinds of invasive plants growing. Ancient Ponies: Saturday, May 27 at 10-12. BZ and Barbara will come ahead and help direct parking.

Field Day June 17 at 10 am. Rain day is the 18th, or we skip to September. It was a very successful event last year, with a lot of fun for all ages.

We have \$250 left in funds that were not used for skates.

May 9 meeting of the select board: our proposal for three new committee members will be brought up. Barbara can't attend, Christine R will attend. Some people are being personally asked if they would like to join, and the openings will be publicized if approved.

Basketball could be organized, as pickle ball has been.

Brian Giggey joined the meeting at 4:30 to discuss pickle ball.

The school allows limited access to keys to SES. If basketball as well as pickle ball is organized, we may need to have further conversation with the principal next year about access to the building.

Pickle ball has been very successful. People are enthusiastic and really nice to one another. There has been great turn out, and skill levels and numbers playing have been growing. Around 20 or more people are participating, in six slots per day, two days per week, Thursdays and Saturdays. People rotate out if others are waiting to play. One court works best in the space and given the volunteer availability. People are meeting one another and creating community around pickle ball as well.

Outdoor courts: can't be close to homes, it is noisy and the sound is repetitive. Additionally, we can use CPC funds for the Athletic Club because these funds can only be used where there is unlimited access, which is not the case with SAC, which is private. Brian, with expertise in this area, has been researching courts, visiting potential court sites. At the SAC people would have to purchase membership. Behind the fire department parking might be a nuisance. This land is town property, so could be used. Behind town hall is also possible but the site is near neighbors. Far back behind is flat enough but might be difficult. The best site was the state park land near the lake. One court would cost \$25-50,000, and two courts would probably be wanted. Brian would prefer the land behind the fire station as it is town land and feasible in many respects. SES does not seem like a good site in some ways, though feasible in others.

If courts are feasible, we would need to submit a grant proposal.

Meeting adjourned: 4:50

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 23, 4 pm