

Lampson Brook Farm (LBF) Board of Directors  
Minutes: February 15, 2022

Board Attendance: David Haines, Jonathan Spiegel, Tammy Ryan, Gerard Kennedy, Bob O'Connor

The Board approved the December 8, 2021 minutes with one edit – when referring to the buildings that “were” not able to be saved, change to “may not be able to be saved”. The board voted unanimously to approve the minutes with this one change. Greg Gould of Hancock Survey Associates dba Sherman and Frydryk presented the draft survey plan for the 5 parcels of the Lampson Brook Farm. Members were very impressed with the work and had a few suggestions. First, one property line along a wetland between two parcels could be made much simpler by straightening out the many jogs in the line. Next there was a discussion of the old landfill. Greg noted that the survey follows the fence that surrounds the landfill site. Since DCAMM may be more familiar with any survey work done for the old landfill, it was suggested to send the draft plan to DCAMM to ask their advice on this issue and the rest of the draft plan. EEA agreed to do this. Greg said he would also look for other locations where complex boundary lines could be “smoothed” for the Board’s consideration.

At the request of a board member at an earlier meeting, Sara Weil, the Clerk of the New England Small Farm Institute gave a history of how the Women in Agriculture, Food Policy and Land Use Reform was formed and then became the New England Small Farm Institute which has stewarded the Lampson Brook Farm since the late 1970’s. This history was a tribute to the work of Judy Gillan, NESFI’s founder and executive director who helped begin the organic and regenerative farming movement and established a farmer training program and network that has grown over more than 40 years among many other accomplishments. Sara updated the Board on the recent work of NESFI in expanding its board; working with 15 farmer partners and partnering with the 4H and Belchertown community garden and its 35 gardeners. Several of those attending, acknowledged the important work that Judy accomplished.

Pete Westover of Conservation Works LLC gave an update on the LBF Management Plan. Pete summarized the virtual public meeting on the plan held on January 26<sup>th</sup> and the over 200 letters received since then supporting the conveyance of the LBF except the Jepson parcel to the Nipmuc Tribe. Depending upon what happens with the current LBF law, there are three possibilities with regard to guidance on how the Board can proceed: utilize the existing law, wait for amendments that were previously proposed or utilize a new law. Since the Management Plan is a living document that can be updated and amended by the Board, it was decided to proceed under the existing law and amend the Plan if changes to the law give new guidance to the Board. Other issues raised included DCAMM’s review of the plan. Pete noted that he had sent the draft to DCAMM staff. There was also discussion of whether DCR is still interested in co-holding the CR over the forest parcel with the Town. It was agreed that both DCR and the Town would be asked to see what their current interest is in holding the CR.

Next the Board discussed the development of criteria within the three Requests for Proposal that will be required for the community farm, forest and enterprise zone parcels. The guidance within the law for criteria was read for these three parcels – including the guidance that will be contained in the Management Plan. A couple of additional possible criteria were raised including the inclusion of farmer housing on the enterprise zone parcel and the addition of an environmental justice criteria. The Board looked at language for under-represented farmers contained in MDAR's recent advertisements for farm leases. The furtherance of the goals of the Local Food Action Plan was also raised as a potential criterion.

The status of the agricultural district bylaw was given by Doug Albertson from the Town of Belchertown. The language is in good shape and the draft survey plan is helpful to include a map of the area included (the enterprise zone and some adjacent land). Doug will get the language and map in final draft form for an upcoming public hearing on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is hoped that one of the Board members can attend to attest to the value of the bylaw in assuring the success of the enterprise zone in supporting the LBF and agriculture in the region.

There was a public comment period. Chief Holley of the Hassanamisco Band of the Nipmuc Tribe acknowledged Sara's wonderful presentation. Clarisse Hart of Harvard Forest commented on the great work of NESFI. She noted the value of reuniting local Indigenous Peoples with local land and the opportunity offered with the LBF. She hoped that NESFI and the Nipmuc Tribe could work together. There was a brief discussion about how both NESFI and the Nipmuc Tribe are interested in the Lampson Brook Farm and maybe a partnership could be formed. It was agreed that this is an important discussion and one that should happen separate from the Board.

The next meeting was scheduled for March 22, 2022 at 6:00 to 8:00. The board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:55.