Farm Star Committee Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)
December 11th, 2015

In Attendance:
Fred Wirth (Chair, NS)
Beth Hooker (Director of Food, Farm, and Sustainability)
Nancy Hanson (CSA Manager)
Annie Rogers (CSI)
Brian Schultz (NS)
Kara Lynch (HACU)
Grace Adzima (Staff Representative)
Josh Minot (Div III Student)
Owen Aptekar-Cassels (Div II Student)
Jess Marsh Wissemann (Minute Taker)

Absent: Mark Feinstein (CS), Alice Grendon (Div I Student)

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES:
No comments. Decision to pass on voting. *No determination on how this will be handled moving forward

JANUARY MEETING TIMES:
Fred will put up a poll with Tues/Fri meeting options after 1/20/16

BEE RESOLUTION:
Hampshire Honeybee Collective proposal to sign a drafted resolution that would formally ban the use of Neonicotinoid pesticides from the campus:

Fiona Post Div II, Seann Stoner (recent alum) – student trustee of BG&S, director of Hampshire Honeybee Collective present on behalf of Hampshire Honeybee Collective.

The Proposal: Through the NGO’s Beyond Pesticides and Center for Food Safety, Hampshire could become the first undergraduate institution to declare itself a neonicotinoid free campus by signing the “Resolution On The Use Of Neonicotinoid Pesticides Toxic To Honey Bees And Other Pollinators.”

• Seann Stoner has been studying Neonicotinoids and pollinators as part of his Division III project, Jonathan Lash has encouraged him to work with Farm Star on strategies related to protecting pollinators.
• One thing Hampshire College could do is draft a policy that ensures that we never use neonicotinoids on campus.
• We don’t have to change our practices since the farm is committed to following organic practices.
• Farmers who lease Hampshire’s Land – the document was amended and got approval to “grandfather-in” the farmers who currently lease the land and use neonicotinoid treated seed (Gordy Cook) – but new contracts that come up will not allow neonicotinoids
• Seann and Fiona ask Farm STAR to make a recommendation to Jonathan to sign the resolution banning neonicotinoid use on campus. (Hampshire would be the first undergraduate institution to do this)
• If this were to happen, David Gibson and participant media want to collaborate on a big media blast to get info out about sustainability/environment/efforts to protect bees.

Committee response to request:
• Mark’s email— (Fred reads…) in favor of committing to the resolution but thinks the wording is alarmist and hyperbolic- would prefer a balanced and cautious statement.
• Nancy: We need to stand firmly on science if we’re going to put something out into the world
• Brian: What about adding a statement at the bottom of the resolution that clarifies our stance
• Brian: “The spirit of the thing is good”
• Clarification needed on future contracts (with farmers and landscapers)
• Grace: does the farm have an organic standards policy?
• Nancy: we have a practice not a policy
• Beth: The farm is organically managed but there is no official land use plan for the campus--this could catalyze.
• Nancy: part of our greater plan could be a policy and recommendation on campus land stewardship
• Kara: are there other aspects of stewardship and land use that we want to think about?
• Beth: we need to have a land use plan across the campus. There will always be another “thing” coming up- we need a standard to stand on
• A media blast [If Hampshire signed the resolution] could generate a lot of attention and we would need to make statements about what we “believe”
• Nancy: [Signing the Resolution] opens up pandoras box a bit –not necessarily a bad thing but we need to be prepared to deal with the spotlight. We have to be able to defend those things in a way that is solid
• Annie: Who among us should be available for comment? So we have all of the ducks lined up ahead of time- we should be very careful how we roll out publicity.
• Brian offers to be a media contact
• We agree there is cause for concern, we recognize that things can change...
• Can we agree to add a sentence?
• Pete: Concern is that having a caveat is a more subtle approach, and the media is not subtle, afraid it would get lost in media coverage and we would end up looking stupid.

• Seann thinks that it would be well received if we add or rearrange the resolution to represent our stance
• Beth: A subcommittee could work on the language to recommend to Jonathan for January
• Annie: maybe we shouldn’t sign it if we have to address the document line by line.
• Brian: we are being asked to commit to a practice and respond to a resolution, not backing the explicit wording of the resolution...
• Beth: does this require a legal read- can we disagree and still resolve?
• Nancy: do we sign as written with caveats at the bottom of the page or do we write our own resolution alongside it?
• Fred: we can write our own.
• Beth: possible outcome: given that we don’t have an overall policy statement, maybe we can make a recommendation to Jonathan to create a land use policy that references this as the impetus.
• Overarching goal is to do the right thing, not about signing something

• Beth: we need a smaller subcommittee that makes a recommendation to Jonathan that recommends a fuller look and policy statement for the institution.

Beth, Brian, and Nancy volunteer to make a recommendation to Jonathan by the end of January when the semester starts again.

• Sean: [responds positively] This is exciting, Hampshire has an opportunity to be precedent setting – agents of change for the world. Happy that we are willing to focus on this issue and possibly take it a step further by creating a thorough land use policy for campus.
• Fiona: It will be important for people on campus to know where the school stands on this issue- communication is important [especially with students].

Kara needs to leave the meeting early. Parting comments:
• Thinking about Art practices and farming practices to add to the 5 year plan- looking forward to sharing something with colleagues in HACU and IA to update people on what this group is doing.
• One idea that Kara heard from a faculty member was the idea of there being a requirement for students to work on the land- how do you connect the farm and the land to the campus more.
OVERVIEW OF THE FARM BUDGETS:

Beth provides an overview of the farm budget.

- Quasi-auxillary budget – that does not account for education/academic programming aspects of the farm.
- We have to make about half of our total budget or cut back
- Important to recognize the budgetary commitment to workstudy – the college has not kicked more money into our budget to account for the increase in wage
  - moving forward, we could meet the allocation of workstudy workers but then be allowed to hire other students who do not have workstudy.
- Have to acknowledge that the students are learning a lot from nancy and pete
- Need to identify the type of education that occurs on the farm. FFS institute, NSF
- We have to pay for our own electricity
- Business Office has agreed to amortize capital expenses
  - Possibly including a tractor, transplanter, fencing, skid steer, livestock trailer
  - The Bene fund (endowed fund for the farm) will be more than enough to cover these capitl expenses over the years
  - Additional items on wish list: harrow, irrigation house, harvest trailer, cattle chute, round bale clamp, frost free cattle drinker

Fred: if we are trying to make a five year plan that incorporates more courses, research etc it should be reflected in the budget so that we have relief from merely focusing on staying afloat financially through sales etc - Funds should be reallocated to the farm in context of a 5 year plan.

Brian: Committee should be more closely involved with the budget

Annie: The committee should think about strategic outreach to the campus to develop a vision and build support to change the status of the farm from auxillary to academic

- Beth is going to provide further documentation and budget projections
CATEGORIES OF THE 5 YEAR PLAN:
*see moodle for supporting documents

Annie shares “first stab” at categorization of a 5 year plan

Categories:
  • “Farm as farm”
  • Academics
  • Community
  • Physical plant

GRANT UPDATES:

  • NS received the Sherman/Fairchild grant - $250,000 summer research in science
  • Grant from the stokes foundation: just finished up the second year
    Includes:
      o Building center for new England food and agriculture
      o Courses, research, student projects, summer institute
      o Summer research funding each year for two identified faculty
        members to use (Jason Tor and Helen Scharber did not use the funds)
        Would like to have a small sub-committee to put out a call for
        proposals to get more faculty involved.
      o There is also funding for student interns in the summer – putting
        together a call. Should it go out from Farm STAR?

  ➢ Fred and Beth will work together on putting out a call for faculty research.