MEETING MINUTES
FARM STAR
April 8, 2016

Present: Fred Wirth, Brian Schultz, Grace Adzima, Pete Solis, Beth Hooker, Nancy Hanson, and Annie Rogers; Kara Lynch

OVERVIEW

We discussed that it would be important to have something substantive done by the end of the semester, rather than focusing on what didn’t work in the past.

To that end, we discuss some key areas of focus: Physical Plant, Community, and Finance. Also, we briefly discussed the three proposals that had been submitted for the Stokes grant.

PHYSICAL PLANT

I. THORPE:
The following were identified as possible areas for improvement:
  • Classroom in Thorpe that functions well
  • Computers, projector, screens,
  • Assess Thorpe for functionality for classroom space/laboratory space

Recommendation: Create a group that would do analysis of space and programmatic goals.

II. VACANT HOUSE AT FARM:
Discussed following aspects briefly:
  • What is purpose of the house?
  • Office space? Lab space? Storage space?
  • Student mod living situation

And in more detail as an apartment situation?
  • Recent graduates as “farm fellows”
    o Students in past would expressed interest in such a situation
    o Would learn more about farm management, but with responsibilities for outreach, animal care and associated events for students.
  • Or pilot apprenticeship program
  • Paid but with subsidized housing
  • Farm tours on the weekends
  • Code level is less for renovation
  • Look over the animals on weekend
  • Connect students to the farm better--get people to come down here.
Q: **How would having students at house mean?**

- Would need to be student housing with support from student life
- Mod with a focus--commitment to help out with animals
- Could there be a benefit that living on the farm could work?
- Or a student RA?

*Group liked the idea of having “farm fellows”, with more responsibility than students. Could be a great way to increase programming and provide necessary farm labor.*

**III. HIGH LEVEL IDEA**

Greenwich will go away someday...

Could the new dorm be a “farm dorm”? Might be a corporation that would run a dorm.

**How about “Food Farm Sustainability” LLC in a dorm (first year students)?**

- A few events w/students
- Who does administration?
- Need a faculty sign off on LLC, or?

What would it look like?

- Farm fellows work with LLC eventually
- Tours of other farms
- Need to work on the farm
- Bi-weekly events for students
- Who is going to do the work?
- Plan and do well--with a trajectory for a new model
- Experimenting institution--
- Trying a LLC--is relatively a small step...
- Could they put on the fall festival?
- Brian wants to do more.
- Flexibility as a benefit/plus

**NEXT STEPS:**

**Pete will ask Byron:**

What is the process? What is involved in running an LLC? Is there an application process?

*Group liked the idea of taking a small step like offering a Food, Farm and Sustainability LLC, as early as Fall 2016.*
COMMUNITY ASPECTS
The farm offers much more to community members than academic courses, and it would be good to explore opportunities to increase community involvement.

Design for inviting CSA members to do something activity on campus?
- Canning
- Pie making
- Monthly breakfast w/students
- Met Al--common piece of work, like painting barn, cleaning up after winter
- Prescott tavern: commercial kitchen/ community projects
  - What is going to happen w/new space?
- Tomatoes to jars
- Students always interested
  - In past, Nancy Hanson, Pam Tinto had cooking classes
  - Pete would love to do that with the meat (and maybe baking?)
  - Perhaps others would be interested in offering classes
- Could farm fellows have this as part of their work
- CSA members are an un-tapped resource
- Farm Camp--lots of interest from that community
- Wheelhouse farm truck--idea for evening meal, but people buy from truck (example from Brookfield Farm)
- Really wonderful kitchen space--could be done at Thorpe

Spiffed up house a bit more--good for community aspects---working space

OVERLAP: Community--Farm Fellows---Space--LLC students?

UPDATE ON BON APPETIT
Bon App is not taking as much produce as in past 2 years. We are still waiting to hear on meat. This will affect budgets negatively.

Would a Summer CSA help with revenues?
- Would this be possible?
- Would need a totally different model, but could be explored.
- Most folks are gone in summer
- Fields are wet;
- Financially not very feasible.

FINANCIALS
How can this committee help solidify the financial expectations for the farm? 
Or a subgroup that works on the budget/financials?
Farm is expected to cover 50% of overall budget
Committee needs to advocate for different system of budgeting
What would that look like?  
Farm is not a business, but it is expected to act as a business.

**Q: At what level does the college support the farm? What is the actual commitment?**

**Long-term:** developing a viable 5 year plan w/real projects and dollars attached  
College and farm--indistinguishable. Positive aspects:
- Beginning of capital campaign--grow the Bene Fund?  
- Jonathan Lash is supportive of farm

**Short-term:** craft a statement about having support and making a case that farm is intimately involved with college.

Craft a case for the farm--what is the $$ number?

Research: what is OPRA model? What is budget?  
Salary + operations + etc...

Farm is part of student life. Could it be part of student activity fees.

Film photo video=charge fees ($65 lab fees/class) to cover their expenses.

Endowment funds--how to grow the Bene fund?

**Action item:** craft a memo, by end of semester to Jonathan and Mary; asking for something specific with regard to the budget. Perhaps increase in student labor allotment? Commitment from college/dining to purchase set amount annually? Define farm out side of "auxillary budget.  
Signed by the committee

**Who is willing to work on this? Beth, Nancy + who else?**

**STOKES FUND DISCUSSION**

Only 3 applicants--disappointing. Next time, need a better way to reach out.  
Fred will ask for clarification on proposals. Suggest funding all, but perhaps looking closely at budgets.