



**TOWN OF BOXBOROUGH
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING
Meeting Minutes**

BOARD/COMMITTEE: Steele Farm Advisory Committee
MEETING DATE: April 27, 2022
TIME: 6:05 pm
PLACE: Steele Farm Barn, 484 Middle Road, Boxborough, MA

Members Present: Jeanne Kangas (Chair), Arden Veley (acting Clerk), John Skinner, Chris Hydak.
Members Absent: Melissa MacGillvray. Other Attendees: Owen Neville (Chair of the Agricultural Commission), and Max Porten, an Acton farmer.

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm by the Chair, Jeanne Kangas

#1 Minutes: Veley made motion to accept Minutes of March 30, 2022 and was seconded by Hydak. Motion passed unanimously.

#2 Notes of meeting with Ed Kukkula, DPW head at Steele Farm on April 6th: This was a posted SFAC meeting but there was no quorum. Veley took notes regarding how the DPW could help maintain the Steele Farm property. That included items like mowing, doing maintenance on the lawn tractor and brush cutter in the barn, improving the parking area, checking the water level in the old hand dug well, improving the wet area of the trail uphill to the west of the barn, and removing the dirt pile from the cement pad beside the barn. Kangas will email Kukkula an abbreviated version of the notes. Kangas also will contact Ken Whitcomb to find out when he will mow the trails and when new volunteers are needed.

#3 Estimated cost of Phase II, preservation of the outside envelope of the Steele Farmhouse: Skinner presented a detailed written report on how much the materials and labor would cost the Town to upgrade the outside envelope (roof, siding, windows, chimney) of the Steele Farmhouse. His estimate comes to \$272,635. Hydak thought the long process to secure CPA funds and initiate the construction process needed a time line. Kangas agreed to make a timeline.

#4 High school seniors Volunteer Day on April 29: Between the hours of 9:45 AM and 12:45 pm, two separate groups of AB senior will be helping to make a new walking trail on Steele Farm property. The seniors will be supervised by Tom Bieber of the Boxborough Conservation Trust and Veley and MacGillvray of the SFAC.

#6 Hand dug well at Steele Farm: The SFAC is considering putting a hand pump on the historic hand dug, stone lined well at Steele Farm. The well water would only be used to irrigate plants. Kangas contacted the Nashoba Board of Health regarding the well and was told that there was no need to test the well water since it would not be used for drinking, only irrigation. Kangas said if a pump was installed a lock would be put on the pump to help insure that people did not use the well water for drinking.

#7 Improvements to parking lot at Steele Farm: Skinner met with a member of the Trustees, holder of the land restriction at Steele Farm, regarding improving the parking area. The member of the Trustees recommended putting a berm on Middle Road to divert the water off of Middle Road and hiring an engineer to study the problem. Ed Kukulla, head of the DPW, suggested paving the parking area was the right thing to do. To pay for the paving, a warrant article would have to be initiated.

#8 Pruning the old apple trees at Steele Farm: The Town is in the process of paying Chris Green for pruning the old apple trees. There is still considerable slash (cut branches) at three apple trees near Middle Road. Neville and Veley will use the AB volunteers on April 29 to remove the slash and create burning piles—if time allows.

#9 Old Business: Initially the SFAC voted to buy and plant three Sugar Maples close to the icehouse. Realizing that three Sugar Maples would eventually take up a huge area when they matured, with branches 30' from the trunk and 60-75 ' tall; the SFAC voted to amend that decision. Hydak made a motion, seconded by Veley that the SFAC would buy two Sugar Maples, a Green Mountain variety at \$327 and a Belle Tower Fall Fiesta variety at \$398, which would be funded by the SFAC grounds maintenance fund and the SFAC revolving fund . It passed unanimously. The trees will be ordered ASAP through Linda Collins at the DPW.

#10 New Business (Annual Town Meeting and Warrant Article 31, Steele Farm-Painting of Icehouse): Kangas proposed that the SFAC at the Annual Town Meeting “pass over” this article. She thought volunteers could paint the icehouse without using Town money to hire professional painters. Veley pointed out that the icehouse roof of wood shingles is in bad condition and that this was pointed out in the Selectboard’s recommendation to favor this article. Skinner said that putting on a wood shingle roof is not a job for volunteers. Two motions were passed unanimously. The first motion, proposed by Veley and seconded by Skinner:

“The SFAC will try to get volunteers to donate their time, talent and some materials before the Annual Town Meeting (ATM, on May 9th) to paint and re-shingle the roof of the icehouse. If volunteers are found, the SFAC would move to pass over Article 31 at the ATM. The second motion, proposed by Veley and seconded by Hydak: “The SFAC, if it could “not” get volunteers to pledge their time before the ATM to paint and shingle the roof, would amend Article 31 to include re-shingling the roof.

#11 Other New Business:

- A. Kangas found after trying a local hardware store and then consulting with a locksmith that she cannot get the barn key copied because the padlock is so old. Neville believes he has several spare barn keys which he will give to Kangas to distribute to SFAC members who do not have keys.
- B. Neville pointed out that the Agricultural Commission has a form, approved by Town Counsel, to license a vendor to use Town land for agricultural purposes. He feels that when Donnie Morse cannot continue to do the haying, that the haying of Steele Farm should be licensed using their form, which has been approved by Town Counsel.
- C. Sarah Murphy notified Kangas that she has completed the annual Spring routine: Turned off the heat in the Steele Farm basement and removed the insulation panels at the basement stairs. She will do the Fall routine also.

D. Sarah Murphy notified Kangas that she looked at the pollinator garden, and that it will need some weeding eventually, and at present looks good; but it's too early to tell if everything survived the winter.

#11 Next Meeting. Wednesday, May 25 at 6 PM at the Barn.

#12 Adjournment: Skinner made motion to adjourn at 7:45 pm, seconded by Hydak. Unanimously approved.