



COMMON GROUND

NEW HAVEN ECOLOGY PROJECT, INC

Cultivating habits of healthy living and sustainable environmental practices within a diverse community of children, adults, and families.

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Minutes – March 2, 2010

Present: Michael Doolittle, Liz Cox, Claudia Merson, Arthur Latimer, Jen Burke, Wendy Battles, John Jessen, Betsy Sneath, Enroue Halfkenny, Kim Futrell, Melissa Spear, Liz Cox, Arthur Latimer, Frank Mitchell, Joel Tolman.

Regrets: Knisely, Gardner.

2. Review of Minutes

Corrections to minutes:

Delete: “Jonathan suggested symbol to doodle”

ConnCAN – fix capitalization

A motion to approve regular payments of over \$10,000 for health insurance

Claudia moves to accept minutes; Kim seconds. The minutes are approved unanimously.

3. Renewal/Public Hearing

The details of the public hearing have been confirmed: March 17th, 6:00, at Wilbur Cross High School. We are requesting that all board members (1) write letters of support, and (2) come out to the hearing. We have been told that we will be recommended for a 5-year renewal; this is our chance to ensure that this happens.

We are pulling together a set of speakers who include students, teachers, parents, partners, and community members. Claudia and Frank have volunteered to speak. Alex Johnson will be speaking. We are limiting speakers to 2-3 minutes. Claudia recommended that we talk with Michael Morand (we should ask him to speak or write a letter, if he will not be present) and Jack Gillette (ask him to speak).

We distributed a list of individuals we’re recruiting to board members, and ask that the board look over the list of participants; are these the right people?

4. Program Reports

School: Third trimester started yesterday. We opened the trimester with a power assembly, with Enroue as the speaker. The spirit in the building was high. CAPT started today; we had only two students absent. Teachers and students are excited about third trimester students. Food & Environment is happening, as is a course on Sustainable Design, connected to site planning.

We also had another major grant go out the door for technology. The grant is from the Connecticut State Department of Education, with ARRA money. Teachers had a smartboard demo; they were hooked on the experience.

Pending grant funding, we will be making investments in (1) curriculum coaching, (2) environmental leadership staff, and (3) technology.

Our adventure club has been really active. A program through the Appalachian Mountain Club has allowed our teachers and students access to great outdoor gear; they have taken two weekend trips in New Hampshire this month. It's a transformative experience for the students involved. The environmental program has pushed farther than ever before.

We were also approached by the Nature Conservancy and a coalition of NYC-based environmental high schools. This partnership – SEEC – aims to involve under-served students more deeply in environmental programs. It will allow our students opportunities for summer residential environmental internships, and to bring together environmentally-themed high schools to share practice, curricula, etc. We are eager to be a part of this.

Program: February vacation, a bit under enrolled 20-30 kids possible result of slight price increase though \$5500 program fees collected is about same income as last year. There may be a reconsideration of pricing structure. Winterfest is March 20th and volunteers are needed. The Seedling Sale and Farm Festival is May 20th. Camp registration opened a week ago and it is $\frac{3}{4}$ full. There are 600 slots, \$500 for 3 weeks, \$10 a day for extended hours; 1 wk camps \$215 per week, ages 8-13 outdoor camp. Financial aid registration requires an initial deposit; followed by an evaluation of need. There is some youth at work money that may free up some financial aid money. Registration requests come into the camp scholarship fund, and budgeting begins this month. With enough money in the fund more can be diverted to financial.

Development: A new monthly development report has been released (trial) to update on what's happening with grant apps, feedback is welcome. Note on the State Farm grant and check presentation and the planning for April's Rock to Rock. Time to round up sponsors and registrants. Individual giving meetings continue.

Budget: New budget dashboard is presented, total income \$20,000 short of where we might have been, though CG may end up with slight surplus even with new computers and some building improvement. There may be a need to carryover NHEP side for expenditures like new water line for garden, \$7000 for sustainability, increase meat birdhouse. Some questions on the numbers though document makes it easier to review the information.

ED report: Melissa introduced Annie Hettick, our new farm manager, who has been at Common Ground a week. The garden plan is finished, seeds ordered and received. Master plan selection process continues and will include student evaluators. The firm will need to integrate student participation into the master plan. The Sustainable Design class and environmental leaders will work together and aspects of the process need to move along relatively quickly. Some projects, like the harvest pavilion with standing grant funding, are waiting to be placed into a master plan. Finally, a new organizational chart is ready, and some site and program projects will benefit from extra hands in addition to the help site class can give: new meat bird house, some general maintenance, farm house entrance.