



# Farm Committee Meeting Notes

March 1, 2016

Hello Farm Committee members. Thank you for attending the March 1 meeting. I don't seem to have the attendance roster, but we had a pretty good turnout, considering it was a slightly different time and location from our typical gatherings. Below is a recap of what we discussed and what's coming up.

## Meeting Summary... *finally*

### 1. Farm Progress/Status

Scott has roto-tilled the area in Owl Field for the 2016 planting beds. Over the coming weeks, staff will coordinate with the landscapers to set up drip irrigation systems for the raspberries and rhubarb, and determine the best approach to watering the garden beds (at this point we believe it is likely to be drip lines in the beds). Hand line and big gun mobile sprayers will be set up in Kestrel and Boot for the corn maze and pumpkin/squash/gourd fields.

250 pounds of barley has been delivered for direct seeding the grain cover crop into the unused portions of Owl, Kildeer, and Boot fields. Scott has the drill fixed up and set for seeding and will begin drilling the approximately 2.5 acres of grain in the coming days.

### 2. Owl Field Garden Beds/Planting Map/Seed Varieties

First, I apologize for how small the print was on the field map. Hopefully, you've had a chance to review the electronic version and could zoom into the various planting beds. On the map, I had swapped the location of the herb bed and the onions, to accommodate any perennial herbs. This places the herb bed at the north end, near the border flowers.

[UPDATE: The following list of herbs was provided as a suggestion for types and varieties: basil (Genovese is a good general variety), chives (perennial), dill (plant seeds when ground is warm), thyme (perennial-French variety), oregano (usually perennial-Mexican, Italian and/or Greek varieties), parsley (annual but can self-seed-flat leaf Italian is probably best), sage (perennial-"common sage" and "berggarten or big leaf"), sweet marjoram, savory (perennial-winter and/or summer varieties) and rosemary (sensitive perennial but "arp" seems to be the hardiest). Chervil (AKA "French parsley") is also a wonderful herb but here might be a challenge in the heat.]

Specific varieties within each bed were selected based on feedback from some Farm Committee members and those seeds that could be readily located at a few online sources. The intent was to create an online "shopping cart" of seeds for the garden, and have Lisa then review and facilitate the ordering. For those seeds or starts we purchase locally, we can arrange those as needed.

There was considerable discussion about the costs of starts for peppers (recall there are three rows of peppers: one sweet, one hot, and one with half of each) with prices ranging anywhere from \$1 to \$4 each. Each of the three beds is to have 60 plants in it, so the variability in price adds up quickly.

Since the map I provided was less than helpful at the meeting, the Committee decided to postpone decisions on specific varieties until the March 15 meeting. Members were encouraged to review the map at their leisure (with some researching the cost/availability of pepper starts), and making recommendations for any specific varieties not included that are more desirable. (*Note: the varieties shown on the map are primarily sourced from Territorial Seed and Fedco Seed, online. If you are identifying a different/preferred variety, please include the name and source for the seed so we can find it for ordering.*) We will then finalize the seed/plant count and costs after that meeting.

[UPDATE: Sharon Halvorsen and Heidi Wagner have researched pepper starts available locally (Edwards Greenhouse, NEON, and Next Generation Organics, and pricing seems to range between \$2/4-6 plants to \$1/per plant. Based on these prices, we may want to discuss revising the ratio of seed to starts for peppers.]

### **3. Owl Field Next Steps**

As stated, Owl Field has been tilled. It is still too early to layout the planting beds, but we will schedule an upcoming field day to either stake or mark the bed locations so we know the count is accurate and we can work on where the irrigation will need to be placed.

### **4. Volunteer/Subcommittee Reports**

Randy Hurst reminded everyone that on March 15 at 5pm, Trisha Cracroft from NRCS will be onsite to discuss pollinator plants and raptor habitat ideas. Contact Randy for more information. He also mentioned that Idaho Power provides used power poles for \$1/foot for the use of raptor nests.

Rachel Diehl changed the status of the Hidden Springs Farm Facebook page to "private" (for members only) and is working with Shannon Ross on NextDoor and the Hidden Springs website.

Linda Beasley coordinated a work party fertilizing the raspberries, weeding, and further trimming back errant raspberry shoots. She suggested we till the east end of the raspberry patch where plants haven't recently grown and transplant existing raspberry shoots into that area. She also mentioned that the tools have all been sharpened, thanks to the volunteer effort of Hidden Springs resident Rick Hansen.

### **5. Staff Reports**

The HSTA is reviewing the agricultural lease agreement with Joe Watterson for the hay operations and will investigate with him the possibility of expanding hay production to include the field on the north side of Dry Creek, as well as farther east between Dry Creek and the homes on Miners Farm Road. This expanded area will also provide additional irrigation area to apply the reclaimed water per the DEQ requirements.

Lisa is suggesting to the HSTA Town Council that the farm area take priority over the orchard for United Water potable water hookups. This would shift the irrigation of the garden beds in Owl and Kildeer Fields from reclaimed water to tap water.

## **6. New/Other business**

Now that the clocks are about to change and it will stay light longer into the evenings, it may be a good time to establish a standing work day/time for upcoming field days. Please think about what works for you and consider possibly meeting at the garden area at 5:30 or 6:00 Tuesday evenings. Additional logistical considerations include parking in the fields' area and reducing the visual impact of our presence there. On group work days, perhaps parking near the equipment barn is more appropriate.

Kristin White mentioned applying the used straw from the DCHS chicken coop into the garden paths. This would reuse the material and provide an effective weed barrier as well as compost/mulch for the gardens. We also need to establish an appropriate location/site for storage of grass clippings, gathered (as needed) from Hopkins during common-area mowing. These clippings would then be used as additional weed suppression throughout the farm area.

The HSTA is considering creating a "Sustainability Committee" and we, as the Farm Committee, should leverage this and consider discussions with the HSTA, the Dry Creek Merc, and the Hidden Springs Elementary School about a community compost facility.

## **7. Next meeting...**

After we've finalized the plantings for Owl Field, the Committee will need to identify the types of squash, gourds, and "early harvest" pumpkins for Boot Field. Keeping in mind that the pumpkins are intended for use at the annual Fall Festival and for decorating/carving into jack-o-lanterns, harvest timing and size are important.

Don't forget to review the Draft Charter Randy Hurst started (it was attached to the last meeting summary). I'd like to see us assemble a reasonable first draft by the end of March, if possible.

I hope to see many of you Tuesday, March 15 either in the field for the NRCS visit, or at the meeting 7pm at the Merc. Thank you.

-Tim Wagner