



Farm Committee Meeting Notes

February 23, 2016

Good afternoon Farm Committee Folks,

Thank you, to those of you at last night's meeting. We had 14 people attend, shared a lot of good information, and have a healthy start on this season's efforts. This email summarizes last night's discussions and reminds everyone of what's forthcoming.

MEETING SUMMARY

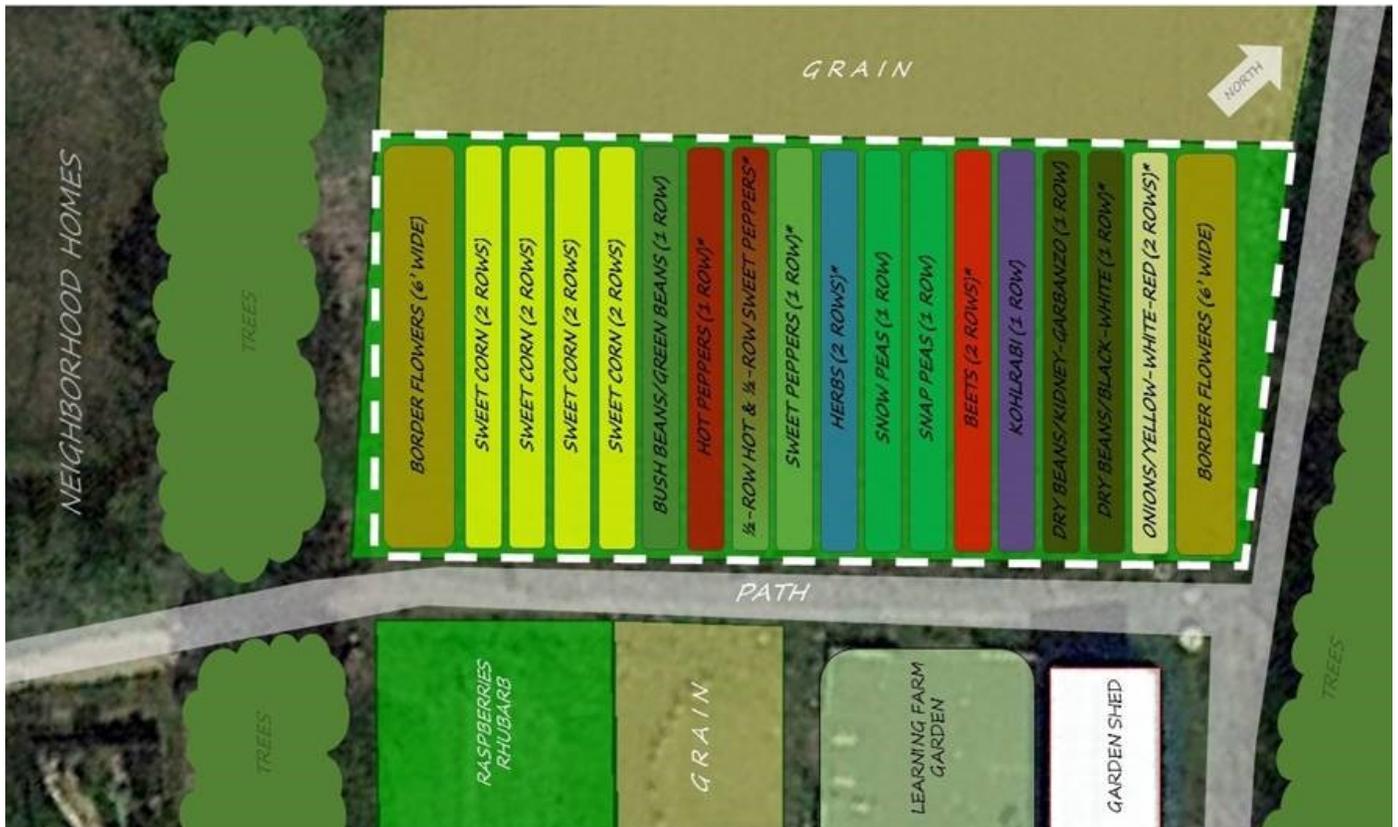
1. Raspberry/Rhubarb

Thanks to the hard work of the Committee members, volunteers, interested parties, and our site Supervisor, the rhubarb has been transplanted into two rows adjacent to the raspberry bushes in Kildeer Field. It has already started to sprout! There are still some rhubarb plants remaining in the wheelbarrow outside the main door of the equipment barn (these will be discarded soon, so if you want them, go get them). The raspberry bushes have been trimmed and Farm Committee members are meeting at **4pm on Thursday, February 25, at Kildeer Field** (where the small garden shed is located) to fertilize and finish cleaning up the raspberry patch. Thursday will also involve an introduction to targeted weeding, using the scuffle hoe (aka "hula hoe": <http://tinyurl.com/hqlalk2>). If you, and anyone you know, is available and interested in the farm, please come out and join in the activities this Thursday (*contact Linda Beasley for more information*).

2. 2016 Planting Map

The Farm Committee has agreed on this season's crop in Owl Field. The graphic below illustrates the 18 proposed plots, located on 0.2 acres at the west end of OWL Field (within the white dashed line). These plots are each 60 feet in length, running approximately east-west (assume the right side is "north"). At the north and south ends, there are 6-foot wide plots for border flowers (specific varieties to be provided). The remaining 16 plots are 3 feet wide each, with 1-foot-wide paths between them. Those plots with an asterisk(*) will have a variety of seed types included within the rows (these varieties are being compiled and will be provided soon along with specific seed counts). The remaining portion of OWL Field (including the former rhubarb patch) will be seeded into barley for weed suppression and year-end use as straw.

The Committee discussed a number of options for maintaining weed control in the paths, and beyond manual weeding would like to make use of lawn clippings from the common areas to lay down in the pathways. The Committee will designate a suitable area near Owl Field for placement of the clippings and use in the garden area.



3. Volunteer Reports

Community Liaison - Rachel Diehl has created a "Hidden Springs Farm" Facebook page for the Committee's use. The page will be "private" (for use by approved members) and she will cross post public information onto the Hidden Springs Community Facebook Page, as well as the Hidden Springs website, and Nextdoor (contact Rachel Diehl for more information).

Raptor Poles - Randy Hurst contacted the local NRCS office and arranged for their biologist, Trish Cracroft, to come out to visit the farm. She will be here at the farm **Tuesday, March 15th at 5pm**. She will also be available to discuss pollinator habitat. She mentioned installing Kestrel nests on nearby homes to support the raptor population. Lisa Ahrends mentioned that Hidden Springs already has a number of Kestrel nests available for use. Additionally, Idaho Power offers a program for raptor poles as an incentive to keep the birds off the live power poles (contact Randy Hurst or Lisa Ahrends for more information).

Flowers - As mentioned above, Trish Cracroft from NRCS will be at the Hidden Springs Farm March 15th to also discuss pollinator plants. The Flower subcommittee is looking at suitable species of perennial pollinator and decorative plants for the fence line borders of the hay fields, as well as annuals for the two border plots in Owl Field (contact Sharon Halvorsen, Paige Cline, or Charlene Janiak for more information).

Planter/Hardware - The Farm Committee has purchased an Earthway hand-powered planter, and Bob Janiak has researched the included seed plates and basic operation of the unit. The planter comes with six seed plates for sweet corn, radishes, carrots, beans, peas, and beets (other similar-sized seeds will also work in these plates). Optional plates are available, and Bob will determine if any of these optional plates are required to complete the 2016 planting schedule (contact Bob Janiak for more information).

On a hardware-related issue, John Ahrens has offered fabrication facilities for Hidden Springs Farm's equipment, should the need arise. We are looking at the possibility of some limited fabrication of the Hidden Springs drill/seeder and sincerely appreciate the offer and skills.

4. Farm Committee Charter / Mission Statement

Randy Hurst has started a draft document outlining some guiding principles, based on the Hidden Springs Town documents (included as an attachment to this email). I encourage everyone to read through it and add your own thoughts and ideas on how we, as a Committee of residents, can continue the purpose and further the goals of the agricultural component of our community (contact Randy Hurst for more information).

5. Separate Session on "Understanding Soil Test Reports"

Later this season, we will be holding a brief tutorial on reading and understanding soil test reports. This will occur when time allows and enough interested parties are available. In the meantime, if you want to do some self-instruction, please feel free to review the material Western Laboratories has posted publicly (<http://results.westernlaboratories.com:8000/Login>).

6. Staff Report

The Town Manager, Lisa Ahrens, provided an update to the status of the agricultural lease agreement for the existing hay fields and the field north of Dry Creek and west of Cougar Field. The land is being leased by a neighboring cattle rancher (Joe Watterson) who owns property in Hidden Springs. Mr. Watterson's operation will irrigate, manage, and harvest the hay on these fields throughout the season, in exchange for the hay. Some portion of the hay will be reserved for the Dry Creek Historical Society's Chickens. Additionally, Mr. Watterson will bring in his own staff and equipment, including wheel line irrigation on some fields, to farm these contracted parcels (contact the Town Manager, Lisa Ahrens for more information).

The Hidden Springs Open Space survey is ready for final review at the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1fII5IHWrlIAR0h_a-fVvVAAN0eL1IJLAM089SNyrkzs/viewform?usp=send_form. Please take a look and answer the questions, to make sure everything works. This survey will be going out the general Hidden Springs Community March 1 (contact the Town Manager, Lisa Ahrens for more information).

7. New Business

The Farm Committee has decided not to take on direct management of the Hidden Springs Orchard for the 2016 season. Based on that, the HSTA will continue the "adopt-a-tree" program for this year (contact the Town Manager, Lisa Ahrens for more information).

The HSTA is considering creating a "grow yard" for the purpose of replacement street and common area trees. John Ahrens asked if the Farm Committee wished to be involved in this endeavor, to which we agreed. Although unable to take charge of it this season, the Farm Committee is interested in maintaining involvement as the operation will likely take place on agricultural land within Hidden Springs and is aligned with the overall purpose of the Committee (contact Town Council member John Ahrens for more information).

Mr. Ahrens also discussed the creation of a "Sustainability Committee" and "Plan" for the entire

Hidden Springs community. Largely driven by the need to improve our effluent water quality, there is also a parallel desire to become a more sustainable community. This could include policy- and practice-oriented actions (e.g. community compost area, restrictions on regenerative water conditioners, etc.). *Chairman's note: As an additional thought, considering the Hidden Springs Elementary School and the Dry Creek Mercantile are located within Hidden Springs, these two facilities alone could potentially contribute considerable compost to a community facility. When combined with some percentage of the 800+ homes in our community, the potential for onsite compost generation is impressive.*

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Farm Committee will be next **Tuesday, March 1st, at 7:30 PM in the Hidden Spring Clubhouse**. This meeting will immediately follow the Open Space Committee meeting. An agenda will be distributed prior to the meeting.

-Tim Wagner