

Heritage Farm Commission
Regular Meeting
Monday, September 8, 2025, 7:00 p.m.
Municipal Building Room A and Via Zoom

Members Present In-Person: Chairman Arlene Fiano, Treasurer Cara Wraight, Paula Lynn, Ann Maulucci, Bonnie Massey, and Alternate Kevin Drake (Arrived at 7:17 p.m.)

Members Absent: Rhea Klein, Leslie Shea

Staff Present In-Person: Building and Grounds Supervisor John Butrymovich

Staff Present Via Zoom: Board Clerk Kacie Cannon

Others Present in Person: Maria Coman, Emile Coman. Mike Nowak, Brooke Nowak, and Former Commission Member Beth Harney

Call to order

Arlene called the meeting to order at 7:13 P.M.

1. Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting August 4, 2025

Paula Lynn moved to approve the August 4, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes. Ann Maulucci seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Resident's Forum (Public Comment for Items NOT on the Agenda)

Maria Coman expressed concerns about the Master Plan for the farm and its potential impact on the farm and the Town budget.

Arlene explained that the goal of developing the farm is to support, not burden, the budget and to make the farm more useable and accessible to the public. She added that plans include providing a sheltered venue for revenue-generating events, such as weddings, re-enactments, and other events, and completing necessary barn renovations. Arlene noted that the plans are preliminary ideas dependent on funding and assured Ms. Coman that the goal is to maintain the farm's original design. She encouraged Ms. Coman to continue attending meetings to provide ideas and input.

Brooke Nowak raised concerns about noise and parking related to farm events. She stated that the Town does not have a noise ordinance, and noted that her neighborhood already experiences unsafe and disrespectful behavior from overflow parking on her street. Arlene acknowledged that parking at the Town Center is an ongoing challenge and noted efforts to mitigate the issue by offering shuttles.

Former Commission Member Beth Harney explained that the Town purchased the farm in 2000, and the Friends of Rose Farm performed significant clean up to turn it into a public amenity. She stated that several improvements are still needed to make the farm useful to the public, and the next phase is to make the farm ADA-accessible and more practical by offering it as a venue for events. She encouraged residents to read the entire Master Plan and reiterated that no funding is currently in place for the changes.

Mike Nowak asked if there is a sequence to the plan and which phase it is currently in. Arlene replied that the immediate priorities include installing water utilities and making the farm ADA-accessible. She noted that the plan has five phases, which are dependent on available grants and funding.

Arlene clarified that the Town maintains both a continually updated Master Plan, which includes a business plan, and a Master Site Plan, which serves as a fixed concept except for trail improvements required by LOTCIP and CRCOG. Once the trail is complete, the Site Plan will be updated to reflect it as an “as-built” amenity. She also explained that the house on the farm will be preserved, with minor maintenance such as fresh paint and noted that the Historic Society raises money specifically for the house. She encouraged residents to review the report by Nelson Edwards Company Architects for plans on the house. Kevin confirmed that the goal for the house is to keep it structurally sound.

Mr. Nowak cautioned against relying on the farm for revenue in the event residents do not use it as expected. Ms. Harney stated that similar farms have been very successful and pointed to Parmelee Farm as an example. She noted that Parmelee Farms was developed into an event space that includes a garden and numerous other amenities for the public to enjoy.

The residents reiterated their concerns about noise, parking, and future repair costs. Building and Grounds Supervisor John Butrymovich stated that the Town currently allocates \$5,000.00 per year for repairs, which does not include landscape maintenance. He also noted that the Town receives approximately \$7,000.00 per year from a farmer who leases space on the farm. Arlene added that donations also support the farm, and some of the money goes toward matching grant funds.

3. Correspondence

a. Cross Country Running Series

Arlene reported that the Commission received a \$300.00 check for the Cross Country Running Series, which will go to the Heritage Farm fund.

b. Memorial Bench Hope Grunski

Arlene corrected the spelling of Hope’s last name to Grunske. She stated that Jim and Joe Grunske are interested in placing a memorial bench on the farm in honor of their mother and are in the process of selecting a bench.

4. Unfinished Business

a. Farm Maintenance Report

John Butrymovich reported that the farm has been mowed and trimmed, and one tree was removed.

b. BHF accounts report

Cara reported that the BHF account currently has a balance of \$11,217.17. She stated that two donations were received last week, including \$429.00 from Rhea’s Yoga Series. Cara noted that the Friends of Rose Farm account currently has a balance of \$7,362.46.

c. Outstanding Projects

1. LOTCIP Follow-Up Heritage Farm Trail Design
There were no updates on the trail design.
2. NPS Wayfinding Signage:
There were no updates on the signage.
3. Update on the Library Display Case/Digging for History Artifacts

Arlene stated that the rough draft on the display case has been completed, and she will review it for inclusion in the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Grant.

5. Summer Yoga with Rhea - Recap

Arlene reported that the Summer Yoga series was very successful and collected \$429.00 in donations.

6. Scarecrow Display Gazebo Green

The Commission discussed entering the scarecrow contest this year and the rules for participation. Arlene asked members to share theme ideas with each other via e-mail. She added that the cost to enter the contest is \$20.00 and will take place during the October 3-5 weekend. Kevin will take the lead on the scarecrow project.

7. Sleighbells Ring - Workshops and Collection of Materials

The Commission discussed ideas for the Sleighbells Ring Fair this year and agreed to the following:

- Ann will reach out to Nancy Masters to solicit boxwood donations (two contractor bags)
- Kevin will help pick up the boxwood
- Paula has been collecting pinecones, and members were asked to gather more for a mid-October workshop to decorate them
- Paula will contact the church to provide a Christmas tree
- Arlene will share a photo of a bird-themed tree and asked members to provide any free items that would fit the theme
- Arlene will send out a date for the pinecone workshop

8. 250th Celebration - Living History Weekend

Arlene reported that Patrick Carroll, from Regiment Bourbonnais, has committed to providing a reenactment in September 2026, either during the weekend of September 11 or 18, for the 250th Celebration. She added that the 250th Celebration Commission took a break from meeting over the summer, and she is unsure when the meetings will resume. Arlene noted that the Town's events will be aligned with State's and will be listed on the State's website.

The Commission discussed involving college students in the reenactment. Mr. Coman noted that he works at the University of Connecticut and offered to share information on the event.

Mr. Coman asked if the Commission has a Facebook page. Arlene replied that the Commission is not currently authorized to have a Facebook page and uses the Town's website to advertise information and events. She noted that members of the public can create a Facebook page for the farm independently, and she will speak with Town Administrator Jim Rupert about getting authorization for an official page.

9. New Business

a. Other

There was no new business.

10. Adjournment

Cara Wraight moved to adjourn the meeting. Paula Lynn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kacie Cannon
Board Clerk

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF THESE
MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO.