

Wakeman Town Farm

June 14, 2021 Committee Meeting

Committee Members Present: Amy Ancel, Anne Burmeister, Alice Ely, Lisa Finn, Susan Schmidt, Judy Sloan, Jaime Smith

Others Present: Sharon Broza-Stone, Ryan Brunelle, Ellen Goldman, Jennifer Montoni, John Montoni, Haley Schulman

1. Events Update

The Farm is back open and in full swing with the continuation of our popular Saturday morning open visitor hours. Our Little Farmers' camps start at the end of June and they are fully booked. We had a successful run of spring culinary kids' programs, thanks to house chefs Annalyce and Lisa. Chef Lisa continues to work her kitchen magic with the folks at STAR in an ongoing program serving individuals of all ages who are impacted by intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Our fabulous special events director, Christy, continues to successfully attract a wide variety of community events to the Farm including: a Staples HS Lacrosse banquet, numerous private parties and bridal showers, an adult tea party, a network gathering of small local environmental businesses on Earth Day, a concert for CLASP Homes, a preschool auction event for Children's Community Development Center, Sunday dinners with Newbrook Kitchens, an al fresco dinner with chef Alison Milwe Grace, and an upcoming dinner experience with Wood Fire Wood.

We launched a Tuesday night pizza pickup with Tony Pizza Napolitano, where families can picnic and visit the animals, courtesy of animal ambassador Judy. Our adult pizza nights with live music are twice a month and continue to sell out.

And, we are excited Harvest Fest is coming back on Saturday, September 11th.

2. Staples High School Senior Internship Update

We've had great reviews for this year's Staples High School Internship program thanks in large part to our new educational coordinator Haley, our farmer Ryan and the continuous efforts of our wonderful Committee, and outside partners. The interns prepped a pollinator pathway site, cared for the barn animals, and performed garden chores. New and exciting this year were several field trips including a visit to a dairy, and oyster farm and the Westport Farmers' Market to learn about the challenges and benefits that come from a career in agriculture and aquaculture. Guest speakers discussed how environmental work intersects with art, travel, philanthropy and food. Numerous hands-on activities allowed for the interns to experience all that sustainability has to offer. Many of these opportunities will also translate into future events at the Farm.

3. Pond and Barn Possibilities

Wakeman Town Farm is alive with possibilities and we are thinking about ways to add secondary space for numerous Farm-related classes and programs. One avenue we are pursuing is updating our front barn to make it more functional. This would turn an underutilized storage space into a multipurpose facility. A second opportunity lies in the pond area, which is appealing to create an outdoor classroom

space for our activities. Both ideas are being explored in depth and would allow for a new array of programming and revenue-generating opportunities.

4. Garden and Farm Stand Update

The gardens are fully planted with a special shout out to the Staples Interns who were very helpful in accomplishing that goal. One enhancement this year is the installation of more support structures throughout the beds allowing us to grow more crops vertically and effectively increasing our yield.

We are excited to kick off our Farm Stand this season on Saturday, June 19th. We will be open from 9am – 2pm every Saturday for fresh produce and flowers, coffee from Shearwater Coffee, Wave Hill breads, Kneads pastries, Pam’s Jams, Guardians Farm Goat Soap and Lotion, as well as our own Wakeman Town Farm honey and logo-wear. New this year we are excited to be expanding our community offering by having rotating local guest vendors.