

Squatter Pigeon, Litigious Squirrels, and Some Good News!

Steering Committee member may be fined for jinxing the farm!

Squatter Pigeon

A few years ago Homing Pigeons were introduced to the farm. They are a noble bird with a long history of exceptional service as carriers of messages.

Though people still refer to them as Carrier Pigeons, the preferred term by the fanciers of these birds is Homing Pigeon or Racing Pigeon.

Birds poop. And birds like pigeons that roost in the rafters of a barn poop all over the place.

So when it came time to put down the new floor in The Big Yellow Barn, the birds had to go! And go they did to a pigeon fancier at Schaub Family Farm.

Then at Monday's meeting, a member of the Steering Committee inquired about the pigeons and whether any of them had returned. It's been several months since they were shipped off, and Nancy felt reasonably certain that they wouldn't be back . . . but added, "You never know."

Say Hi! to Bertha! Who after 3 months, found her way back to the farm on Wednesday.



Some people think it's just a bit too coincidental that mentioning the pigeons on Monday has one of them showing up on Wednesday. Rumors have it that the member who asked about the pigeons will be fined for jinxing the farm.

Bertha will once again be rounded up and shipped back to her new home with instructions to stay away from the farm and the new floor in The Big Yellow Barn.

Litigious Squirrels



Last week's story was all about the squirrels losing their home as the big maple tree had to be taken down. As soon as the newsletter was sent out, the squirrels attorney fired off this notice to the farm:

Dear SFF,

The Squirrel family is now homeless through no fault of theirs. The libelous implication that Mr and Mrs Squirrel hollowed out the tree cavity will be vigorously challenged in court. At most they were temporary squatters in a tree, which is not a crime in our fair town of Vernon. In addition, we note that no eviction papers were filed with the Vernon court. That and other procedural lapses will be pointed out to a jury of squirrels, raccoons, chipmunks and eco-diversity biologists. See you in court.

McCawley B Crow Esq.
Dewey, Cheatum and Howe
Attorneys at Law

The issue is now in the hands of our attorney who assures us that there was nothing libelous in our newsletter and that McCawley B Crow is just cawing in the wind.

Good News to Share & A Call for Ideas



According to the phone call that Nancy received from Jaime at the CT State Dept. of Agriculture, the farm has been awarded a Viability Grant of \$29,000!

The raised beds are going to become a reality!

Now, all we've received so far is a verbal confirmation of the award. It will take the state until some time in February or early March to get the paperwork in place for us to sign. But still, how cool is this!!!

And just so you know, this grant comes with stipulations and time frames. One of the stipulations is that the farm has to match the amount of the grant. That's done through other fundraising efforts plus counting in the money that's saved by the volunteer hours people put in at the farm,

More information and opportunities to get involved in making these raised beds a reality will be coming your way over the next weeks and months.

Bats and Birds Get New Homes

While the farm has many great neighbors, Center Road School is very special to us. We love having the kids here whether it's celebrating the beginning and end of school with free ice cream, or having classrooms and scout troops coming to visit.

Thanks to a grant that the school received from Pratt and Whitney, the farm will be getting bat and bird houses placed on the property. The grant provides school and community education, as well as, supporting the construction and placement of habitats and planting of native plant species.

Discussions are currently taking place as to how many houses will be raised and where they'll be placed. We'll keep you up-to-date as plans become firm.

Last But Not Least - We Need Your Ideas !

You know that the Strong Family Farm is a special place.

Did you know that we're going to need a 'Special Permit' in order to obtain zoning approval for things we may want to do in the future?

It's true, and that's why we want to hear your ideas of how you envision the farm shaping up. It's not just about how the farm can continue to serve the community, but also how it can make money to keep it going well into the future.

To get your juices flowing, here's the definition of Agritourism from the State of CT:

In general, agritourism is any agriculturally based operation or activity that

brings visitors to a farm or ranch. In Connecticut, agritourism activities include pick-your-own orchards, wineries, hay rides, farm tours, farm dinners, on-farm festivals, and corn mazes.

And, here are some samples of the ideas that we've already collected:

- Boardwalk through wetlands/Walking path – perimeter and through orchards with benches
- Commercial Kitchen for Classes, Demonstrations, Rentals, and Onsite Catering
- Meeting Areas and Offices in the various buildings as well as the main house.
- Classrooms for learning about sewing, cooking, homesteading, plant garden store, root cellar, window boxes, etc., and from the recent Steering Committee meeting,
- Selling manure/compost for gardens

What are your ideas?

What would like to see take place at the farm?

What would bring you to the farm more often?

What about having dinners and celebrations here?

Whatever you can think of is what we want to hear about. Don't censor your ideas!

You never know what an idea will spark unless you first voice it!

Send your ideas to: info@strongfarm.org

And, of course, we'll keep you up to date with what's happening with our Special Permit.

Many Thanks!

Quinn Eurich, Editor

References used in this newsletter:

[Hallowed History of Homing Pigeons](#)

[Carrier Pigeon vs Homing Pigeon](#)