

BOARD/COMMITTEE: Steele Farm Committee

MEETING DATE: May 8, 2025

TIME: 7:03 pm

PLACE: Steele Farm Barn

ATTENDEES: Christopher Hydak (Chair), Fred Waugh, Catie Coyne, Joe Ferguson, Melissa MacGillvray

Non-Board Member Attendees: David McKiernan (Select Board Liaison), John Fallon, Bruce Hager

1. Approve minutes of April 10, 2025

Fred made a motion to approve, Joe seconded. All approved.

2. Finance

About \$17k remains of the original \$310k for farmhouse Phase III renovations. This money—assuming there are no further change orders to the existing contract—has no expiration date and will be available for any future renovations consistent with Phase III.

3. Farm Maintenance

a. AB Senior Volunteers

About 10 students volunteered for several hours on Thursday, April 17. They helped to plant about 75% of the Christmas tree saplings, to remove 8 stumps, to clear grass around Christmas trees, to clear downed tree limbs around the property, to remove weeds and debris around the barn exterior, and to remove theatre props from the barn.

b. Mower Maintenance

The mower probably needs its oil changed and blades sharpened; Melissa will follow up with the DPW.

c. Haying Contract – Christopher

There is a possibility that the field will be mowed before May 15, depending on whether a contract is in place. Owen Neville is overseeing the mowing contract for both Steele Farm and Flerra Field.

d. Old Milk House concrete removal - Melissa

Melissa sent a reminder and a photo to the DPW.

e. Pollinator Garden

Melissa has extra echinacea, black-eyed susan, purple cone flower, and iris. She will coordinate a work team to transplant them to the pollinator garden.

f. Other

Melissa has contacted the town about several dead pine trees along the main trail. If possible, the town could also remove the small saplings growing along the guardrail on Middle Road.

4. Building Maintenance

a. Ice House Painting

Christopher will talk to Susan to see if she still is interested in helping or providing supplies.

b. Barn Organization

As a result of AB student volunteer efforts, most of the theatre props have been removed. The theatre soundboard was discovered in the barn during this process; Fred will contact Blanchard School to see whether they have any interest in taking ownership of it. Christopher noted that the barn map should be finalized and that committee leads need to be held accountable for their materials. Christopher will take the lead on this.

c. Farm House Phase III Status - Christopher

Phase III is nearly complete. Remaining work includes window framing on the inside of the building as well as exterior painting. The town building inspector will ensure that all work is completed consistent with the contract. It is likely that the work will be complete within a week or two.

d. Farm House Renovations - Phase IV

The next phase of renovations is on hold until the fall. The committee discussed sending a survey to the town to solicit ideas for using the building, as this will likely determine the next phase of renovations. Fred mentioned that a survey has been done in the past and that the survey document appears on the town website. Melissa mentioned that historical houses in Concord operate by closing off floors besides ground floor in order to conform with accessibility requirements. Joe and John noted that one option is not to use the farmhouse for a specific purpose, but rather to preserve it as part of the experience of Steele Farm; the house, barn, and ice house make it a historical farmscape, as opposed to just another piece of conservation land. Dave noted that the house is not currently insured because it's not in use; Michael would know what constitutes sufficient use for insurance.

5. Old business

a. Capital Plan

i. Parking Lot status – Christopher

No update since last meeting.

b. Handbook

No update since last meeting. Discussion about what constitutes a quorum for editing a document. Christopher will consult with town.

c. Camping policy

No update since last meeting.

d. Garbage cans

Discussion of garbage can options outside the barn. Need to make sure that any garbage cans that remain inside the barn after events are removed and emptied.

e. Steele Farm - Hidden Treasures - May 12-18

The barn will be opened 2 – 4 pm May 18 for the Hidden Treasures event. People may show up as early as May 12 to view the property. The Historical Society and the Steele Farm Committee will host jointly. Christopher suggested showing up at 1:30 pm on May 18 to clean up the barn and to display some of the old farm tools. John has some Hidden Treasures signs that he will put up on May 11.

6. New business

Discussion of potential new committee members. The next step is for candidates to fill out the form available on the town website.

John mentioned that several pieces of antique furniture, including a desk that originally came from the farmhouse and a pew from one of the town churches, are available for placing in the farmhouse or storing in the barn. There is no documentation of these items, just word of mouth that they were originally owned by the Wetherbee family. They are currently in Schoolhouse #2. John noted that Schoolhouse #2 is open for visitors on Sunday June 8th, between 2pm and 4pm. One of two of the members of the committee should drop by and see what the items look like and to talk with Nancy Morrison about their provenance.

7. Next meeting date

7:00 pm June 5, 2025 in the barn.

8. Adjournment

Catie made a motion to adjourn, Fred seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.