

Minutes of New River Valley Beekeepers' Association

February 11th 2016

51 people present.

The meeting started at 6:32pm.

The minutes of the January meeting were accepted.

Old business:

Jim Hill reported that the board has been considering a proposal to set up an Association bee yard. He reported that we have permission from Dr Fell, to set up an apiary on VT land in the Prices Fork area. This has been discussed by the board through email. Jim had researched liability issues and determined that liability is not recognized in VA. Any signed waivers are not actually valid.

So what are the risks? We would commit to running a safe operation to minimize risks. The apiary if approved would be restricted to club use only, with appointed managers and used by members at educational events. Attendees would be bee keepers and/or members and as such would know the risks. The apiary would not be accessible by the general public, nor to VT students. The hives will be enclosed in an electric fence. The land is part of a VT Agriculture department farm with fencing and a gate which could be padlocked. The land is accessed by agriculture and engineering students.

The bee yard would be established on a handshake agreement with Dr Fell, based on his stature at VT. If we need paperwork like a Memorandum of Understanding it would kill the deal. Even if we had such a document it would not give us much: VT could still order us off at any time regardless.

If we are going to do this we need to get started at least next month.

Questions from the floor:

Q: Would there be any costs involved with the electric fence?

A: No, since the electric fence would be solar-powered.

Q: Is there a possibility of children and/or the general public sustaining an injury due to electric fence?

A: The beeyard would not be frequented by children. Warning signs will be placed on the fence. During an event, there will be supervision and the fence will be turned off.

A detailed budget proposal has been sent to the listserv. In summary it should cost around \$2700 total but it would be incremental costs, not a one-time payout, as the bee yard is developed.

The proposal is for no more than 6 hives, there is no intention to expand.

Approx 3 different methods of building hives: all mediums, deeps+mediums, double deep, maybe one top-bar hive

Any nucs created may be sold off in the 2nd and 3rd year after being inspected.

The use of the bee yard is intended for “field days” during the spring to illustrate all aspects of beekeeping.

After the discussion, a Motion was made to: *Authorize the board to begin establishment of a club apiary on VT research land as agreed between Dr Fell and Richard Reid, with authority to spend no more than \$3000 to do so.*

Bill Wallace proposed the motion, Jack Price seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.

The Treasurer’s report was accepted.

The business meeting ended at 7:00pm

Raffle tickets were sold during the break. After the break Richard Reid reported that he had given a talk to the Mount Table Ruritan Club at the invitation of NRVBA members Cindy and Bill Turner. As a result the Ruritan Club donated \$110 to the NRVBA.

Susan Isla spoke for a few minutes to say that she and her husband have a small homestead in Christiansburg at 208 Jones St SE. They have 2 acres on which they are practicing regenerative agriculture and organic gardening. If anyone is interested in placing some of their hives on their land, their contact information is suwardel@vt.edu 540-250-6804.

At 7:30 pm Richard gave a talk *on Nucs and splits – expansion model beekeeping.*

The meeting ended at 8:40 pm

Submitted by

Sue Hossack

NRVBA Secretary