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Annie Stirna
Chairman Board of Finance
Town of Killingworth
12.9.2024

Dear Chairman Stirna

I am unable to attend the meeting on Tuesday evening but would like to share my input regarding the operating funds for Parmelee Farm.

In 2022–2023, our actual expenditures totaled \$12,152. During the 2023–2024 budget process, we explained and discussed the need for similar funds. Although we requested only \$10,970, the BOS and BOF ultimately reduced our operating budget by an additional \$970. Parmelee Farm operates primarily through volunteer labor and Town-owned equipment. However, when maintenance issues arise beyond the expertise of our volunteers, we must contract out the work, as we do not have dedicated staff to handle such situations.

The Parmelee Committee is charged with overseeing the management of the property according to the Master Plan. This responsibility includes ensuring the Town provides funding for maintenance, much like it does for other parks and properties. Our budget requests are based on the best estimates derived from prior experience and are meant to reflect actual costs.

This year, in addition to regular expenditures, we faced additional costs for repairing aging tractors and mitigating a rodent issue to prevent permanent damage to structures. Looking ahead, we anticipate the need to replace the HVAC unit in the pavilion due to rodent-related damage. An estimate for this replacement has already been submitted to finance.

Every expenditure in the operating category has been carefully considered and justified for both short- and long-term benefits. While community donations and volunteer efforts enhance the property and support special projects, the maintenance and upkeep of Town-owned assets, such as Parmelee Farm, should be funded through operating budgets. Our committee remains thoughtful and frugal in managing taxpayer funds.

With both our equipment and volunteer base aging, the ability to maintain the property under the current setup is becoming increasingly uncertain. To address this, we have submitted an RFQ for property maintenance, which has been discussed by our Chair, Scott Hawkins, with the First Selectman. This proposal aims to establish a process that aligns more closely with the maintenance procedures for other Town properties and ensures more accurate budgeting going forward.

I hope this helps clarify the shared understanding between the Town and the Parmelee Committee and reinforces our mutual commitment to maintaining this valuable community asset.

Peg Scofield
Parmelee Farm Committee

CC:
Board of Selectmen
Parmelee Farm Committee
Finance Director