

Agenda Minutes
Agriculture Commission Meeting
Monday, July 11, 2011
Town Manager's Conference Room
909 Foxon Road
7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Call to Order: Chairperson Clifford Potter called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Members Present: Clifford Potter, Joe DeFrancesco, Gerald Adinolfi,

Alternate Members: Dudley Harrison, Harry Juniver

Town Planner Carol Zebb

Members Absent: Mike Doody and Ryan Van Wilgen

2. Approval of Previous Months Minutes

Chairman Potter offered the following corrections to the June 6, 2011 minutes: under call to order – Joe is listed twice, both Gerald and Harry were absent and Dudley came in at 7:35.

Town Planner Carol Zebb offered the following corrections: under 4.b the first line, first sentence, add words “State grant” in front of administrator and in the last sentence, instead of “committee consented to \$30,000.00” have it read that “She confirmed that the submitted expenses totaling \$30,000.00 will be reimbursed back to the Town.” She also stated that under 4.f, on the motion after the end of “Rose’s Orchards”, the following be added “with the event co-sponsored by the Commission”.

Member DeFrancesco suggested that the minutes contain more information on the discussion and the comments that were made during the meetings. Members agreed.

Member DeFrancesco moved, seconded by Member Harrison to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was carried unanimously.

3. Unfinished Business

None at this time

4. New Business and Continued Business

a. Brochure Distribution Info

Chairman Potter stated that the brochure was put into the Totoket Times and he thought that the Commission got it out there in time, just before all the inserts for the Potato Fest. The Commission agreed.

Town Planner Carol Zebb stated that this year there were 18 brochure listed agricultural businesses in Town. She still had to deliver them to the Libraries, but, Bob Hull, Library Director, would be picking up them up this Friday.

b. Public Hearing Tax Issue

Chairman Potter said that the public hearing on the proposed ordinance on a tax exemption program for farm buildings in active use is scheduled for 7:30 pm during the Town Council meeting tomorrow. Due to the delays from the Town Council, the hearing was pushed out to July.

Member DeFrancesco stated that he is concerned that it is the middle of summer and you are not going to have the turnout that you are expecting. It is impossible for farmers to get away from their heavy workload in July. You lost your edge as you won't get the farm commitment in July.

Chairman Potter stated that you are going to be there and you need to state to the Council that this is not a good time and if you didn't have your sons you would not be able to be there.

Member DeFrancesco stated that he thinks it is not going to work, but will try his hardest in his remarks to the Town Council on the importance of the ordinance to not only the farmers but to the Town because it helps to continue and to preserve the Town's agriculture.

Member Adinolfi stated that if the farmers want this tax break, they should be there to support it.

Member DeFrancesco stated to Chairman Potter that he needed to call each farmer and advise them about this meeting. Just sending a letter was not going to do it. As head of this commission, he suggested that the Chairman needed to get a team together to get calls out. Also, he thought the position was lost to contact the homeowners next to the farms and the farmers for their support.

Chairman Potter stated that he understood why Joe was upset, but there was only so much that could be done since the Commission was only advised about this meeting less than 10 days ago.

Much brainstorming took place on who should be called. Members and staff offered and agreed to call various farmers to ask them to attend the meeting and give their support .

c. Augur Barn Repairs Grant Issues Final Closeout

Town Planner Zebb stated that the Town received the \$30,000 grant check from the State and the Grant is now closed out.

d. Walk through result/action at Augur Barn

Chairman Potter stated that this was not off the agenda but the Commission needed to put the item on hold until winter.

e. Tractor Pull remote location (updates)

Chairman Potter reported that site preparation work is being done on the remote tractor pull site at Rose's Orchard on July 23rd. Al Rose's plan is to line the tractors up along the fence and place the concession stand there next to it. Al is supplying the power and the pull back tractor. There really wasn't that much that the Commission needed to do, but, it will put up the Commission's signs and some members will be attending part of the event. The weigh-in will start at 8:00 and the light weight pulls will start at 9:00. The event has the potential of running until 5:00 pm.

f. Potato Fest Updates

Chairman Potter reported that everything seems to be ready for the Potato Fest and Alternate Member Harrison also mentioned that we should get help to work the tent.

Member DeFrancesco informed the Commission that he spoke to Larry and Nelson and it was decided that each of them would donate 25 bags of corn and anymore would have to be purchased. He spoke to the Town Manager who told him that was not a problem. Commission members suggested he also co-ordinate any daily festival requests for additional corn with the three farmers on who would supply it.

h. Member items to be discussed

None at this time

i. Visitor Comments

Paul Ramunni stated that he lived in Northford next to Cecarelli Farm. He wrote for the PATCH and came to the meeting to write about agriculture in town. He brought all his stuff locally and people needed to know it was available. Anything he could do to help in the Town would be a cool thing for him to do. He wanted to give the Commission whatever kind of exposure that would help the town's agriculture as it would be free.

5. Executive Session: None

6. Adjournment:

Member Harrison moved, seconded by Member DeFrancesco to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.. The motion was carried unanimously.

Submitted by:

Denise Prather

Denise Prather – Recording Secretary