

**Agenda Minutes**  
**Agriculture Commission Forum Meeting**  
**Wednesday, November 9, 2011**  
**Council Chambers**  
**7:00 pm.**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call:**

**Call to Order:** Cliff Potter called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**Members Present:** Cliff Potter, Ryan VanWilgen

**Members Absent:** Michael Doody, Gerald Adinolfi, Joseph DeFrancesco

**Alternate Members Present:** Harry Juniver, Dudley Harrison

**Guests:** Town Planner Carol Zebb, Town Manager Richard Branigan, Town Assessor Christine Barta, Kenneth Neubig, Marge Newton, Dean Heath, Richard Kolakowski

**2. Public Open Forum on North Branford Agriculture Issues and Concerns (An open session to receive Public comments and questions and have Public's questions answered by the Commission).**

**3. Commission Discussion, Review and Possible Action on Comments Received from the Public Open Forum.**

Chairperson Potter addressed the Public regarding the Agency is currently working through the tax adjustment. He expressed that the timing was bad for the abatement. He gave credit to Mayor Candelora for his assistance in helping the Agency put the materials together. He reassured the Public that the issue is not "dead" and will be resubmitted at another time when the economy changes and hopefully gets better.

He advised the Public that the Agency supported the Potato Festival and has had many tractor pulls. They also helped in the celebration of Al Rose's family's 365<sup>th</sup> year of active farming. He expressed that the Augur Barn project has been coming along and the barn now has a new roof, new windows and is now currently water tight. There will be more done to the barn in the future.

Dean Heath expressed that the Augur Farm pole barn has a piece blowing off. He noticed this in the last storm and he expressed it needs attention. Chairperson Potter advised him that he is currently trying to get this addressed. Town Planner Zebb also acknowledged how easily the State Agent signed off on the Grant for the Augur Barn due to the quality of the work.

The Agency has also helped support the Greenhouse Project at North Branford High School. Ian Gibson is in charge of this project. It may not get 24/7 attention but it will continue to function and only get better. The Agency is very happy with its progress and the School Curriculum will be written in accordance with this “hands on” project. Chairperson Potter also advised the Public that the students participating are covered under the Town insurance. He also advised that Abby Rose has assisted with this project and has been very helpful.

Town Planner Zebb noted that it was Mr. Heath’s suggestion to get an educational program to introduce the students to farming and this has happened. She also advised that the brochure is now in its fourth year and there are currently 18 active farmers with products and service. It is put in the Totoket Times as an insert to all households. The brochure is also in both Town libraries on the community rack. It has telephone numbers and websites listed. She expressed how town people are amazed what these local farms have and what they produce.

Dean Heath spoke and acknowledged that people do speak about the brochure. He expressed that the brochure helps with local people. He suggested that the brochure be distributed in July. He also suggested Agriculture Tours of the farms showing the greenhouses in early Spring and beef raising. Chairperson Potter added possibly doing tours four times a year (March, June, August, October) and advertising said tours in the Totoket Times. Alternate Member Harrison agreed with the tours.

Dean Heath also spoke about “Twilight Meetings”. Nelson Cecarelli is also doing “no till” concerning his farm which is every educational. Mr. Cecarelli is trying to build organic matter.

Member Potter expressed that Marge Newton’s farm will be celebrating 100 years in October, 2012. The Agency will be recognizing this. Town Planner Zebb suggested hayrides and photographs and a display at Town Hall. Chairperson Potter also advised that he took Winter photographs of Newton farm and maybe a banner can be posted on her farm celebrating the 100 years. There are photos and videos of local farms and the videos are in the process of being transferred over to a newer taped version.

Member VanWilgen expressed a concern about getting various groups’ attention (i.e. boy scouts). Dean Heath suggested 4H and various groups in Wallingford. Chairperson Potter added that the Town is trying to keep children in their own agriculture atmosphere.

Member VanWilgen also advised the Public that the Agency is trying to preserve a presence in the community and to educate the public regarding local farms. Chairperson Potter also added that Ben from The Sound was an outlet for the

Agency and he is no longer with The Sound. Member Potter advised the Public that the Totoket Times does post items about the Agency.

Town Manager Branigan suggested approval from the farmers of photos taken of their farms and maybe in the future doing a calendar or posting pictures at the Town Hall.

Town Planner Zebb stated that the CT Farm Bureau is working with representatives from various towns and members from the farming community on developing model farm friendly zoning regulations that are projected to come in the late Fall. She anticipates the Agency and the Planning and Zoning Commission reviewing the model regulations and working together if the Town zoning regulations on agriculture need to be revised.

Marge Newton asked the Agency how to discourage ATV's from riding on her property. Town Manager Branigan referred to Chapter 255, Section 14 of Connecticut General Statutes (he brought copies for review) which governs all-terrain vehicles on private property and certain repercussions that can be taken for this trespassing.

Kenneth Neubig thanked the Agency for all their help. Chairperson Potter thanked everyone for coming to the Forum and advised the Public that another Forum would occur again next year and the Agency is open to comments, questions or concerns at any time.

#### **4. Adjournment**

Member VanWilgen moved, seconded by Alternate Member Harrison to adjourn the Public meeting at 8:21 p.m. The motion was carried unanimously.

Submitted by:

*Debra Ann Criscuolo*  
Recording Secretary

