

**Agriculture Commission Special Meeting
Wednesday, November 12, 2008
Council Chambers
909 Foxon Road
7:00 p.m.**

1. Pledge of Allegiance

All participated

2. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Call to Order: Chairperson Clifford Potter called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Members Present: Joseph DeFrancesco, Michael Doody
Nelson Ceccarelli

Alternate Members: Dudley Harrison, Harry Juniver

Also Present: Town Manager Richard Branigan

3. Open Forum

Member Potter addressed the floor by telling the area farmers that the Agriculture Commission is here to help. The Commission is looking for ideas. He then reads the Mission Statement and follows up by stating there are a lot of good products in town. He opens the meeting to the floor.

Joseph Diglio spoke. He referred to Act 52-15 which the town denied. Member DeFrancesco helps explain it. Member Potters suggests a Committee to research the Act. Member Doody states that this it he Agriculture Committee's first year with the budget and things are more organized. It will be brought up with the Town Council concerning the final cost. The Agriculture Commission will push and hopefully accomplish it. He also stated that the farming should start with the kids in the schools telling their parents about the products.

Member DeFrancesco states that there is now a better approach. Council members have changed and are possibly "farm friendly". He will be the point of contact and will bring items to the Agriculture monthly meetings.

Member Potter discusses the pamphlet and how it was liked. The Totoket Times and Sound (Ben Rainer) has agreed to feature farms in their paper.

Alternate Member Harrison speaks about his 72 years in the maple syrup business. Until the word got out no one knew he was there. The brochure that was printed helped double his sales.

Keith Bishop spoke. He now has over 100 employees. He worked to get the Guilford Commission started. He suggested a building exemption proposal should be put out. He also suggested applying for grants and possibly coupons in the brochure. He also suggested farm pictures in council chambers. He also informed the Agency that the Farm Bureau helps with legislative alerts. He also suggested a tractor with lights on it to be placed in front of the Town Hall property.

Ryan Van Wilgen spoke. He suggested coming up with a bumper sticker and website for the local farmers. Also possibly the farmers visiting the children at the schools – possible North Branford Agriculture Day

Member Potter added that a pamphlet will be put out in 2009. A vote was taken as to who would like an article written on their farm. A total of four hands agreed.

Dean Heath spoke. Big Y has put money into the project. He suggested that the committee state that “Big Y” has local town products. He also suggested tractors to display the heritage of the farms. He also wanted to know how much percentage of the town land is farm land. Member Doody added that the Assessor can provide that information and the amount is not very large at all.

Member Potter stated the Potato Festival has been fruitful. He also reiterated about the Memorial Day parade and the participation in the North Haven Columbus Day parade.

Town Manager Richard Branigan spoke about the economic developing keeping the agriculture lifestyle viable. He agreed that the website is a fantastic idea and there are lots of good ideas in the town. He also suggested the Commission get on the Board of Education agenda for possibly December.

Member Ceccarelli spoke about the right of farm ordinance with the Town of North Branford. There are current issues with neighbors and also want needs to be watched is the Zoning laws.

Keith Bishop spoke. The Farm Education Program information was handed out the kids in schools. He stated it is hard to get the kids to the farms. He suggested possible traveling farms with the County Bureau office. He also suggested using the viable Grants to do in kind service hours video taping agriculture events.

Member Potter ended the open discussion by stating it was a very productive night and there were many good ideas posed.

4. Adjournment:

Member DeFrancesco moved, seconded by Member Doody to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.. The motion was carried unanimously.

Submitted by:

Debra Ann Quinn

Debra Ann Quinn – Recording Secretary

