

TOWN OF KINGSTON

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting held 01/18/07

Those present: Christine Nava, Rui Santos, Beth Corbett, Bill Napolitano, Barry Mathias, Jean Landis Naumann

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM by Chairman Nava. The 7:30 appointment was with Chief Rebello and Kelly Cram, Animal Control Officer. There was general discussion of the role the members of the Agricultural Commission could play in any complaints about farm animals. The Chief and Kelly explained that Kelly's role is to collect data and make suggestions to resolve any complaints. She can then call in the building inspector or health agent to enforce town bylaws. She can also contact the State for assistance. Bill pointed out that under Title 1 the Board of Health agent can go on property, issue citations and take actions. It was agreed that it would be helpful for all for the AgCom to prepare a fact sheet that could be used by the police, Kelly, the Board of Health and citizens regarding the rules.

Kelly has 28 barns on her list for yearly inspections. She maintains a list of the large animals she is aware of but the town currently has no requirement that large animals be registered. Jean suggested that we ask the Town Clerk about adding a section on farm animals on the town census form. This would assist with any animal health issues and emergency evacuation plans. There could be a brief explanation of the advantage to listing the animals on the census form.

Bill suggested that once we have had a right-to-farm bylaw passed, we should print it up and provide copies to all realtors so that prospective buyers were informed about this. The group agreed to work on preparing a right-to-farm warrant article but realize it will not be ready for this year's annual town meeting.

Jean mentioned the three articles on this year's annual town meeting warrant that the AgCom may wish to address. Articles 46 and 47 increase the acreage requirement for large animals. Another article amends the earth removal bylaw to increase the amount that can be removed for agricultural purposes. Jean will get copies of the current bylaws and the committee will discuss these at the next meeting. Bill pointed out that if farmers had a Conservation Management Plan in place it would help with such issues as earth removal.

Jean reported that she has received positive responses from the school superintendent as well as the chair of the Kingston School committee about using space at the elementary school for a farmers' market this summer. Jean has prepared a memorandum from Christine to Dana and will mail this. The Kingston School Committee will schedule this

for discussion on Monday February 12 at 7:00 PM. Jean and others from the committee will attend to answer any questions that arise.

Christine reported that Brad has contacted the FFA coordinator at Silver Lake Regional High School to discuss having an FFA student serve as an associate member of the AgCom. Karen Johnson and the owners of Kingston Nursery are interested in becoming involved with the AgCom.

Jean reported that members of the Kingston Garden Club are interested in attending our February meeting to discuss mutual interests and projects.

The group decided that we should have a subcommittee work on the farmers' market concept. There are many rules and regulations that will require some action before we can make this happen. Bill offered to work on this. He will contact Irene Winkler who worked with the Carver AgCom in setting up their farmers' market.

Barry reported that the Conservation Commission is discussing the possibility of purchasing the McFarlane farm using CPA money. Jean explained that she read recently of a town that used CPA money to buy conservations land, then sold a small piece of it to a developer and recouped nearly half the original price of the land. Barry reported that the Conservation Commission is actually considering using a few acres of the farm for a senior center and affordable housing. Jean explained that she is in favor of building a community center rather than just a senior center so that the building can be fully utilized by all members of the community. There was a general consensus that this might be the smarter way to go.

The members agreed that there is much work to be done to gather information and prepare some educational materials that would benefit the community, incorporating many of the issues discussed at this meeting.

The next meetings are scheduled for 2/7/07 and 3/8/07 beginning at 7:00 PM. Jean will call to make the room arrangements and posting of the meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Landis Naumann