Minutes
AGRICULTURE COMMISSION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026
MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX
MEETING ROOM 3
VIA YOUTUBE LIVE
7:00 P.M.
REGULAR MEETING

1. Call to order & Pledge of Allegiance

- Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm

2. Approval of the agenda

- Ron motion to approve
- Shaleen 2nd

3. Approval of the draft minutes from December 1, 2025 meeting (circulated by e-mail)

- Ron motion to approve
- Aaron 2nd

4. Chair's report

- New folks here to apply to the commission after post in the newspaper.
- Framework -
    - How can we be a voice for those with agricultural businesses?
    - How can we attract farmers to town?

- Eye to the statutes - are we fulfilling the mission.

5. Correspondence - Applications received from the town.
    - Theresa Govert
        - Works on farms in town.
        - Connections at state legislature and understanding of the state budget process.
        - Interested in bringing our voices to the state level.
    - Stephanie Cobleigh
        - New farmer in town. 44 acres. Forest plot, too. Regenerative Ag Conference attendee. Interested in shared resources among farmers in town. Interest in local mentorship.
    - Rochelle Davis
        - 4 year resident. USDA grant for early successional habitat. From Northern California. Interest in connecting people to the land. Writing and teaching experience. Grant writing experience. Experience with USDA grant.
    - 4th interest member with no application yet - Pat Gable (also on the Conservation Commission) - No application yet.
        - Experience with horse farms, cow farms, grain farms
        - Owns an active farm in Maryland. Passionate about farming.
        - Interested in lantern fly control.

6. New Business
    a. Review applications to join Commission
    - Aaron motioned to recommend Rochelle and Stephanie as regular members and Theresa as an alternate .
        - Second motion - Shaleen
        - Vote to recommend all - Unanimous

    b. Review of Town Ordinance that created the Agriculture Commission
        - Advocacy - local agricultural
        - Information - Conduit between nonprofit agencies, civic organizations, municipal boards and commissions, elected officials and local farmers.
        - Education - recommend changes in local law
        - Conflict resolution - serve as a resource for information
        - Economic Opportunity -

    c. Potential initiatives and vision for the Commission in 2026

- Move this discussion to next month

7. Old Business
    a. New member recruitment
        - 2 more alternates needed - possibly only one.
    b. Property tax relief for East Haddam Farms
        - We will talk about this next month with new members.
    c. East Haddam Farm Stand project
        - Waiting for Jim Curtin to attend the meeting.

8. Public Comments - Comments from the public. Discussion from the public.

- What is the definition of a farm in East Haddam?
- How can farming be resilient? Weather - advocacy, education, climate change, networking, vulnerabilities
- Do we know how many people make money from farms in East Haddam?
- Comments from First Selectman about getting state data on people in town with farmer's tax exempt permits.
- Who are the farmers in town? What are they doing? What is their scale? How can we advocate for them?
    - Todd Gelston suggested a town farm market might identify

  Aaron suggested ……

- Next meeting structured conversation - come with ideas.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn - Shaleen

Second - Aaron

Participants may view the meeting on YouTube Live at the following link:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLZq-CmatoKY6FW829c6mBA?view_as=subscriber

You may also access the YouTube Live link from the Town's website:
www.easthaddam.org