AGRICULTURE COMMISSION MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2022
MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX
MEETING ROOM 3
7:00 P.M.
REGULAR MEETING

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The meeting was called to order by Dr. Gross, Chair, at 1903.

Attendees were Ron DiStefano, Mark Henderson, Carleen Quinn (by telephone) and Ronald Gross.
Excused: Peter Dean, Bonnie Buongiorne
Guests: Shaleen Thody and James Curtin

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A motion was made by Mr. DiStefano for approval of the Agenda, seconded by Mr. Henderson, and approved unanimously. The minutes were approved without changes unanimously.

A motion for approval of the minutes from the previous meeting (November 1, 2021) was made by Mr. Henderson, seconded by Mr. DiStefano, and approved unanimously, without changes

There were no comments from the Chair.

Communications (included previously circulated November 1, 2021 Agriculture Commission minutes for approval and the membership applications from Aaron Taylor and Shaleen Thody.

In order to accommodate Mr. Curtin, ***Old Business*** was moved up in the agenda; the item for discussion was the status of the proposed Farmer's Market, previously presented by Mr. Curtin, and referred to the previous First Selectman for comment. Mr. Curtin presented the proposed site plan for the Farmer's Market Barn and Pavilion, as well as the parcel of land that he is currently trying to buy from the State. This land is the site of the old Town Street that sites between the existing Town Street and Mr. Curtin's property. At the present time, the State is asking $18,000 for the land and $1,000 for closing, but there are several issues that need to be settled before this sale can occur, and Mr. Curtin stated that there are other alternatives if the property is too expensive to buy. Regardless, he is committed to the project, and has already retained the services of Roger Nemergut (engineer) to draw up the site plan. The strip of land under discussion with the State is approximately 41,000 sq. ft.; once purchased and developed, Mr. Curtin would donate the parcel of property for the Market to the Town, but would need a grant to fund the approximately $250,000 needed to construct the barn and pavilion. Mr. Curtin is proposing that the barn be post and beam construction.
After considerable discussion, a two-part motion was made by Dr. Gross: (1) the members of the Agriculture Commission wholeheartedly endorse the project as proposed by Mr. Curtin and (2) the Agriculture Commission will begin to work with Mr. James Ventres on obtaining a grant for the project. The motion was seconded by Ms. Quinn and passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Review current status of the garden project at the Middle School – Shaleen Thody
   Ms. Thody told the Commission that her students recently harvested carrots that were then served by the cafeteria. They have also harvested kale and parsley, the beds have been cleared and prepared, and strawberries have been planted. Ms. Thody will now have two classes of 13 and 14 students that will deal with the garden. In addition, she is now in charge of the STEM

program and is looking to grow the program.

Needs: - need to cover the grass with something other than weed block, which doesn't seem to work. Mr. Henderson will work on this with Nancy at Shagbark

- Wheelbarrow – Mr. Henderson will work on that with Shagbark

Wants: an indoor greenhouse that can be located in the school. Given his background, we will ask Mr. Taylor to work on this with Ms. Thody.

An email from Mr. Keith Wilson was shared with the Commission; Mr. Wilson has submitted his resignation from the Commission, effective January 4, 2022. The membership applications to the Agriculture Commission of Ms. Thody and Mr. Taylor (previously circulated and discussed at the November 2021 meeting) were reviewed. Mr. DiStefano moved for the acceptance of these applications as Alternate Members. Mr. Henderson seconded the motion, and the motion was accepted unanimously. The recommendation will be forwarded to the Office of the First Selectwoman for her approval. All other members of the Commission whose terms were due to expire have expressed their desire to remain on the Commission, and the Chair will ask the First Selectwoman to approve their terms for the appropriate times (three years for regular and two years for alternate members).

The Meeting Schedule for 2022 was determined, and is attached for review.

There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Henderson, and seconded by Mr. DiStefano at 2025.

Respectfully submitted by Ronald Gross, MD
Acting Commission Secretary

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