MINUTES
AGRICULTURE COMMISSION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2022
MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX
MEETING ROOM 3
VIA YOUTUBE LIVE
7:00 P.M.
REGULAR MEETING

The Agriculture Commission meeting was called to order at 1903. Present were Bonnie Buongiorne, Shaleen Thody, Ron Gross, Aaron Taylor, Mark Henderson, and Ron Distefano (remotely by telephone).

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited after which a motion was made by Ms. Buongiorne to approve the agenda. This was seconded by Mr. Distefano, and approved unanimously.

Unfortunately minutes from the previous meeting could not be discussed or approved because they were lost due to a computer hard drive failure.

There were no comments from the Chair.

The only communication discussed was from James Ventres regarding a request for the Commission to consider acquiring the Kronberg Property on North Moodus Road as Open Space. This property, known as the "Grand View" sits across the road from the Grand View Campground, is a 94 acre parcel of land, and approximately 22 acres of this land is currently a hay field, and is hayed by the owners of the Campground. After careful consideration, the following motion was made by Dr. Gross, and seconded by Mr. Distefano:
"'The Agriculture Commission recommends that the Kronberg Property on North Moodus Road, a 95 acre parcel known as the "Grand View" be acquired as Open Space, with the provision that the approximately 22 acres that is currently a hay field and is hayed yearly remain exactly as such in perpetuity."
The motion was approved unanimously after a spirited discussion about other potential uses, all of which were felt to possibly create more conflict than benefit.

Another issue that was raised after the discussion of the open space discussion was exactly what the process is to involve the Agriculture Commission when land use and farming issues are being considered by other town commissions and/or committees. IT was suggested that there should be "a box that needs to be checked" to consult with the Agriculture Commission whenever issues such as these are being considered. The Chair did not know what the process is, and he will check with the Selectmen's office.

Under New Business the need to address the vacancy left with Mr. Peter Dean's resignation was addressed. After considerable discussion, and with the consent from Mr. Taylor, a motion was made by Mr. Henderson to change Mr. Taylor's position from alternate to regular member. This was seconded by Ms. Buongiorne, and approved unanimously.

In the Old Business section, Mr. James Curtin filled in the members regarding the progress being made to purchase the old Town Street property from the state. A letter has been sent to the State in support of this by Ms. Haines and Mr. Needleman, and Mr. K. Goldberg is the current

individual from the Right of Way Committee that is working on this project. A long and involved discussion was entertained regarding the project; specifically who would manage this, what would the structure look like, what would be the hours, and what else could/would the structure be used for. It had been suggested by Ms. Haines that Ms. Stone and Ms. McKinnon be contacted so that they are aware of the project, seek their input and see if they would be at all interested in participating. Ms. McKinnon was not interested and Ms. Stone had not, as yet, been contacted.

The second item discussed was the possibility of student engagement with the Agriculture Commission. Ms. Thody has been having weekly meetings of her Environmental Club with her middle school students (10-12 students at each meeting), and will soon reach out to the high school to see if there is any interest in the older students in becoming involved in that project, and with the Agriculture Commission. She also discussed the middle school garden; as with everything else, the garden was, sadly, adversely affected by the current severe drought. Ms. Thody also agreed to have the middle school students come to the November meeting of the Agriculture Commission and present the status of the Middle School Garden.

There being no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Henderson for adjournment and seconded by Mr. Distefano. The meeting was adjourned at 2011.

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