# Agricultural Meeting Minutes
# Monday, September 11,2023
# Municipal Office Complex, Meeting Room 3
# Via YouTube Live 7:00 pm - Regular Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 19:05 by Agricultural Commission Chair, Ronald Gross. Meeting minutes by Shaleen Thody - Ag. Commission Alternate

**Commission members present**

Aaron Talyor, Mark Henderson, Ron Gross, Bonnie Buongiorne, Ron Distefano, Carleen Qunn, and Shaleen Thody(as alternate)

**Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence**

Ronald Gross asked for a moment of silence in honor of those who lost their lives and those who were rescuers in the 9/11 attacks.

**Approval of Agenda**

Carleen Quinn motion to approve the agenda for the meeting. Ron Distefano second. All were in favor of approval.

**Approval of Minutes from 7/10/2023**

Minutes were attached to emails and circulated at the meeting in hard copy. Shaleen took the minutes on 7/10/23. Ron Distefano made a motion to approve the minutes. Bonnie made a second motion to approve the minutes. All were in favor of approval.

**Comments from the Chair**

Ron Gross stated that there was a filing of an Freedom of Information Complaint by Mr. Kevin Staehly. Ron Gross will go to town attorney with missing minutes and agendas. It was noted that meetings are recorded on YouTube so the agendas and minutes will be re-written from that record.

**Communication**

Emails were sent to the Ag. Commission regarding the Freedom of Information complaint, draft regulations for farm stands, along with minutes from 7/10/23.

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**Update from Mr. Curtin regarding Year-Round Farm Market**

- Irene Haines and the state approved the new appraised value of $18,000 but the state is not willing to donate the land.
- Mr. Curtin is moving forward with the site plan.
- Variance will be needed for the barn with an approval by planning and zoning.
- There will need to be a conservation easement of the lot with a discussion with inland and wetlands to take place.
- Size and scale market with barn is yet to be determined. Mr. Curtin wants to keep it below commercial size.
- Mr. Curtin would like to have the Ag. Commission look at how the town might manage the space and fund the project with grants.
- Barb Hagum(sp?) is a resource mentioned for writing grants as operation of the building would fall to the town along with maintenance and upkeep.
- Mr. Curtin will bring maps to the next meeting.
- A question about the state being given back $500,000 for the community garden/kitchen was raised.
- Aaron Talyor mentioned specialty block grants from the Department of Agriculture as an area of exploration for municipalities and non-profits.

**Update on Farm Stand/Farm Store regulations & sub-committee discussions**

- Aaron and Ron D. have attended meetings with P&Z and EDC.
    - Focus is on creating more opportunities for farmers and for expansive thinking.
    - 3 levels
        - Farm stand any zone 200 square feet allowed now.
        - Farm store more expansive and might be subject to special exception review by P&Z. Can supply CT Grown that is not your own at 50%.

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        - Farm market is looking like something larger that might include baked goods. Not everything would need to be agricultural and would be a bigger building similar to Gotta's in Glastonbury.
- There was further discussion needed about tack stores, wineries, breweries, stables that the commission will address at a later date.
    - Will the blue highlighted areas allow for "grandfathering" for existing farms?
    - What are the considerations for the commission when we address the edits needed?
- Aaron and Ron will bring comments to the next sub-committee meeting on Thursday, September 28th, 2023
- Bonnie is concerned about the permitted uses section.

Ron called for the meeting to end after a further apology for lost minutes and agendas along with the FOI request. Carleen made a motion to adjourn followed by a second from Bonnie.