MINUTES
AGRICULTURE COMMISSION
MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024
MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX
MEETING ROOM 3
VIA YOUTUBE LIVE
7:00 P.M.
REGULAR MEETING

1. **Call to order**
    a. ***Meeting called to order @ 7:03 pm***
    b. ***Attendance:*** Bonnie Buongiorne***. Aaron Taylor, Ron Distefano, Ron Gross, Shaleen Thody, Mark Henderson***

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
    a. ***Completed***

3. **Approval of the agenda**
    a. ***Approved with appointment of two alternate members to voting spots for this meeting in absence of voting members.***

4. **Approval of the draft minutes from November 6, 2023 meeting**
    a. ***Ron D and Mark H. motion to approve the draft minutes.***
    b. ***Approval will be sent the town clerk in the morning.***

5. **Comments from the Chair**
    a. ***The FOI complaint filed by Mr. Kevin Staehly has been suddenly dropped by Mr. Staehly.***
    b. ***Communicated to the commission. No discussion.***

6. **Communications**
    a. **E-mail from Janice Ehlemeyer (staff for the Regional Agriculture Council at the RiverCOG. The council has a representative from each of the 17 towns in our region, *except* East Haddam) re: the Regional Agriculture Council (RAC) monthly meeting**
        i. ***Aaron Taylor and Ron Gross "volunteered"***
        ii. ***Emails sent with dates and times for the RAC.***
        iii. ***Aaron attended one meeting.***
        iv. ***Jess Stone was the representative from East Haddam. She still would like the spot.***
            1. ***How does East Haddam officially appoint a member?***
            2. ***RAC will take an alternate***
            3. ***Must go through town's official process to be nominated and appointed by the town.***
            4. ***Was Jess Stone appointed by the town? Ron will call Irene Haines and find out who the representative from our town is for the Regional Agricultural Council at the RiverCOG.***
        v. ***Goals of the meeting Aaron attended:***
            1. ***Equipment sharing with no-till items will be loaned and with a grant***

2. *Clearing house for the regulations in all the towns – applicable regulations for the towns. Jim Ventres attended a subsequent meeting.*

7. **New Business**
    a. **Aaron Taylor: Discussion of CT Examiner article regarding property tax exemptions**
        i. *Plan moving forward is to discuss these possible exemptions with the First Selectwoman*
        ii. *Fact sheets from the Farm Bureau sent to Ron Gross from Aaron Taylor that Ron will show to Irene when he meets with her.*

8. **Old Business**
    a. **Status of Sub-committee meetings: Aaron Taylor and Ron Distefano**
        1. *Sub-committee meetings have been held and are finished.*
        2. *Draft with Jim Ventres*
    b. **Status of the Farm Stand: James Curtin**
        i. *Status unknown*
        ii. *Ron Gross will continue to try to contact James Curtin for an update.*
    c. **Status of the Farm Stand/Farm Store regulations: James Ventres**
        i. *Next step is public hearing – Jim Ventres will set it up.*
            1. *Date has not been set yet.*
    d. *Middle School visit*
        i. *Visit from MS students*
            1. *May 6th invite the kids*
        ii. *Wish list from kids*
            1. *Committees at Water Company that might be willing to donate to school*
    e. *High School integration*
        i. *Update on the program*
        ii. *Ron and Bonnie will reach out.*

9. **Comments from the public in attendance– comments will be strictly limited to 2 minutes per person**
    a. *There was no public in attendance.*
10. **Next month's meeting will be on April 1st**
        i. *Ask Irene to address the group about the tax exemptions*
        ii. *Jim Ventres public hearing with P&Z - outcome*

11. **Adjournment**
    a. **Motion – Ron Distefano 7:35 pm – Bonnie 2nd**

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