Meeting Minutes
AGRICULTURE COMMISSION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2024
MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX
MEETING ROOM 3
VIA YOUTUBE LIVE
7:00 P.M.
REGULAR MEETING

Members present:
Aaron Taylor
Bonnie Buongiorne
Shaleen Thody - alternate/minutes
Ron Gross

1. **Call to order**
   a. Meeting called to order at 19:03.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
   a. The pledge to the flag was led by Ron Gross.
   b. Ron asked for a moment of silence in honor of 9/11.

3. **Approval of the agenda**
   a. The agenda was approved by Aaron. Second Bonnie. There were no additions to the agenda.
   b. A correction of the date from April 8 to June 10th was made.

4. **Approval of the draft minutes from June 10th, 2024 meeting.**
   a. Bonnie approved the minutes from the June 10th meeting. Aaron second.

5. **Comments from the Chair**
   a. **Status of the Community Garden**
      i. High school is using some of the plots in the summer.
      ii. Ron Gross will be inquiring with Jim Ventres about the status of the plot of land.
         1. Some questions are why has some of it not been maintained?
         2. There is more investigation needed to follow up on previous Agricultural Commission work.
   b. **Thoughts about the permanent Farm Stand Management**
      i. Ron Gross will work on talking to Irene Haines about a manager for the farm stand.
      ii. Ron volunteered to help manage in the beginning as a property manager and a business manager.
      iii. If it will be owned by the town, then will the town have a hand in the management of the place?
      iv. Aaron asked "What will the model be?"
         1. Bring in vendors from East Haddam? Out of town?
         2. How big will the building be?

6. **Communications**
   a. **None**

7. **New Business**
   a. **None**

8. **Old Business**
   a. **East Haddam Farmers Market Status: Mr. Curtin**
      i. Oversight of the property perhaps will be from the Ag. Commission.
      ii. Mr. Curtin is donating the land and pursuing/pushing the site plan.

iii. Mr. Curtin offered to donate the $12,000 to the town to get one continuous piece of property. and The driveway set-up will work better with the plot of land that the state owns.
iv. Conservation easement needs to be moved. Zoning and wetlands will be involved according to Mr. Curtin.
v. Post and beam barn would be ideal according to Mr. Curtin.
vi. Transferring the land will take at least a year.
vii. The Finance Board will have to approve the donation from Mr. Curtin.
viii. Open farmer's market proposed by Mr. Curtin. Perhaps a cooperative.
    1. His idea is that it would be open more than one day a week.
ix. Aaron cautioned that a lot of farmers already have weekends booked.
x. Goal was a covered space for the farmers market to exist.
xi. What other parts of the food system can be served by the building? - Aaron asked Mr. Curtin
    1. Farmers are always looking for commercial food prep space?
    2. Shared packing space
    3. Cold storage is also something farmers are looking for.
    4. Could there be a loading dock?
    5. There are concerns about a building without a program.
xii. Will we need a grant writer?
    1. https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp
    2. https://dudleyfarm.com/farmers-market/
    3. Ron Gross will sit down with Irene Haines to discuss grants and the site plan.

b. **Monthly Stop the Bleed Course: third Monday each month at 1900-2030 with cooperation of the Parks & Recreation Department**

i. Ron encouraged anyone in the farmers community that uses machinery would benefit.
ii. Ron is willing to go to farms in town so that people know what to do.

9. **Comments from the public in attendance– comments will be strictly limited to 2 minutes per person**

a. No other public members in attendance.

10. **Adjournment**

a. Bonnie moves to adjourn. Ron second at 19:54.

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