



TOWN OF ACTON AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes Nov 10, 2020

6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Present: Morene Bodner, Patrick Hearn, Heidi Porten, Paul Simeone,

Natural Resources Assistant, Zoom host, and recording secretary: Bettina Abe

Attendees: Acton Conservation Trust President Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Peggy and Joe Hebert

Regular Business:

- 1 Heidi convened the meeting at 6:00 PM
- 2 The virtual meeting information advisory was read in its entirety
- 3 Oct 15 meeting minutes were approved unanimously by roll call vote

Citizen's Concerns:

- 4 Susan stated there was a response due to Paul Simeone regarding Couette-Simeone land ten year lease renewal. Bettina added that an RFP must be issued and bids must be submitted and then voted at town meeting. Paul mentioned that in order to plan and plant crops the renewal timing is an important factor and that notification by early spring is desirable. Bettina will check on the process for having the Ag Com hold this lease and whether that privilege would also entail responsibility for soliciting bids and who approves the bids, etc. Bettina suggested we may want to invite Nina Pickering-Cook to a future Ag Comm meeting to advise us in this area.

5 New Property in Consideration-

No discussion at this time.

6 Expanded Protection of Morrison Farm Property –

Bettina has called a meeting for Town Manager John Mangjaratti and Dean Charter to meet with us on site at the farm property. The suggestion is that a successful initial meeting would then be followed by an Ag Comm Member working directly with designated town officials to submit a plan for protection. Morene reported that she met with Kristen Guichard of the Acton Planning Board in regard to protecting the Morrison Farm property. The property is presently Zoned single family residential R8. Changing zoning, if required, requires a 2/3 vote at town meeting. Placing a CR on the property, exclusive of the house and barn, may be the best option. Morene will meet with the Littleton Town manager to learn what they did with a similar property. The CR would not include the house and barn with the intention they would be preserved as a historical monument and thereby continue to provide the attractive presence and character of the property at its primary entrance. A CR will require professional writing and may also require a public forum before a meeting with the Acton Town Manager. Would the Ag Comm hold the CR is another question. Susan mentioned that the cost of the typical CR creation is \$14,300 which includes cost of specialized writing of the CR and a fund to support Stewardship of the CR. Morene was chosen by consensus to chair the Morrison Farm Protection

subcommittee. The timeline for preparation is two months before town meeting which will be difficult to achieve for the 2021 annual town meeting.

7 Zoom Collision-

At approximately 6:50PM Zoom terminated the meeting as we apparently collided with an overlapping meeting from another committee.

8 Nov 17th Meeting to Complete-

Bettina was able to quickly reschedule 17 Nov at 6:00 PM as a new time in which we would then complete the agenda for this Nov 10th meeting. The minutes above apply only to the discussions of the interrupted Nov 10 meeting. A new agenda will be published for the Nov 17 meeting. The remaining agenda items from this meeting that will be discussed at the Nov 17 meeting are:

- **Farm Signage**
- **AG Plan Discussions**
- **Next meeting Agenda.**