



TOWN OF ACTON AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes 13 Apr, 2021

6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Present: Patrick Hearn, Joe Hebert, Peggy Hebert, Heidi Porten, Paul Simeone

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

Attendees: Acton Conservation Trust President Susan Mitchell-Hardt

Absent: Moreen Bodner

Specific Business:

Heidi convened the meeting at 6:03 PM

The virtual meeting advisory was read in its entirety

1 Citizen's Concerns – No citizen's concerns voiced at this meeting

2 Approval of 9 March minutes and 30th March minutes

Paul moved, Pat seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously by roll call vote

3 Extended Protection for Morrison Farm

There were a number of responses from town committees to the Morrison Farm proposal letter. Due to difficulty in opening the zipped files the majority of the commissioners had not been able to read the responses. Bettina will send an unzipped version if possible to do so within email size limitations. Bettina commented that the responses were generally very positive with only one person objecting to the value and preservation of the house.

4. Farm Signs

The Ag Comm Right to Farm sign proposal was presented and approved at the Select Board meeting of March 15th. There were public inputs to create the signs artistically and place them attractively. Bettina will coordinate the purchase and placement of the signs with the Acton DPW.

5 New Property in Consideration

Susan reported that one horse farm is on the market and a significant parcel on the Acton RT 2 scenic gateway is coming up for sale. The town is involved in discussions.

6 Ag Plan Development

The Ag Comm will not hold regular meetings during the farming months of May through Aug so members volunteered to start researching and writing various parts of the Ag Plan during the

adjournment time. The Ag Plan outline previously submitted by Paul was used as the guideline of work topics. The group agreed to share work in a Google Folder that Heidi will create and invites us to. All contributors should save frequently using a unique file name to protect accidental deletion. The topics in the outline were each discussed with individuals so as to match their areas of personal interest and expertise with the topics.

- Section I – Establishment of the Commission.
 - Bettina
- Section II – Identification of existing Agricultural land and Operations
 - (Susan Mitchell Hardt would be the coordinator. Heidi is interested in helping on this.)
- Section III- Review of Town Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan
 - Extract items from these planning document that relate to agriculture so that we can ensure the Ag Plan is aligned with exiting plans and that there is continuity across plans. (Bettina)
 - Section III A and III B - Identification of potential land for agricultural use and consideration of parcels mentioned in OSRP section 12. Also establishing priorities for protecting or adding agricultural land. (Susan/Tom Tidman)
 - Section III C – (new topic under consideration) Agricultural Vision for Town of Acton - This topic would consider agricultural possibilities such as additional locally grown food in the town and how this might be integrated into the community. For, example should Acton investigate locally grown food for use in school lunch programs or local food banks and food coops and how would this fit with available land and the interests of the town? (Pat would like to work on this section)
 - Section IV- Education of the public on agricultural issues- (Paul)
 - Section V- Establishment of Coordination with other town Boards and Local Groups (Presently unassigned, discuss with Moreen)
 - Section V1- Process for assisting and Advocating for Agricultural Interests – (Joe and Peggy Hebert)

7 Next Meeting Agenda - The Next scheduled meeting will be Sept 14th, 2021

Reading the Virtual Meeting Advisory (Assuming virtual meetings are still required)

1. Citizen's Concerns
2. Approval of 13 April Minutes
3. Extended Protection for Morrison Farm
4. Farm Signs
5. New Property in Consideration
6. Ag Plan Development
7. Next Meeting Agenda

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:05 PM

- 8 Linked relevant documents and meeting materials can be found in the Agricultural Commission's page on the Town website or through the following link. <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-12706>