



TOWN OF ACTON AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes 30 Nov, 2021

6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Present: Morene Bodner, Patrick Hearn, Joe Hebert, Peggie Hebert, Heidi Porten, Paul Simeone

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

Attendees: Acton Conservation Trust President Susan Mitchell-Hardt

Regular Business:

Heidi convened the meeting at 6:01 PM

The virtual meeting advisory was read in its entirety

1. Citizen's Concerns

There were no citizen concerns raised

2. Approval of the 26 Oct meeting minutes:

Minutes were unanimously approved by roll call vote.

3. Expanded Protection for The Morrison Farm Property

Morene and Bettina summarized there is support amongst town boards and committees as well as very active community garden group of more than 50 members that support preserving the Barn and House. There are also recent examples of town antique properties that are being considered for restoration while providing significant public space as well as historical preservation. For example, the Asa Parlin house on 17 Woodberry Lane proposal will provide a 70 person seating for cultural events, while preserving the flavor in the Acton Town Center. However, hazardous material removal, ADA accessibility, Restrooms, Patios, etc and the need to pay prevailing wage sum up to very expensive restoration projects that stress the town budget and place burden on those who have to manage these budgets. The path forward appears to be to thoroughly communicate our proposal is to have the Morrison Farm House be a historical monument requiring only a weather tight shell and without public entry so that much of the expense inherited in restoring and maintaining antique properties will be avoided and that restoring the barn would provide space for present town needs such as equipment storage for the Cemetery Department. The emerging proposal would also include the formation of a support group "Friends of Morrison Farm" and placing the entire Morrison Farm Property under an Ag/Conservation Restriction. A meeting needs to be scheduled with Town Planning Staff, Town Counsel and Ag Comm to agree on the best path forward. At this meeting a table of pros and cons of various solutions would be presented

4. New Property in Consideration

There was no new property in consideration reported.

5. New Ag Comm Member Development

Pat Mentioned there are numerous people in town who would be good future Ag Comm members and that inviting their attendance one a year or so they could learn more about town government and the role Ag Comm plays may be mutually beneficial. Having a group of "Friends of Ag Comm" would help provide prepared candidates for future Ag Com membership and ensure the Ag Comm continuity over many years. The group agreed so the next step would be to provide contact info to Bettina of possible candidates.

6. Walking Trail Extension to Gleaners Headquarters

Susan Mitchell-Hardt reported a meeting needs to be held between Boston Area Gleaners, SVT, ACT and Ag Comm to discuss placement of a trail extension from the Assabet River Rail Trail to Boston Area Gleaners Headquarters. The trail is a requirement as part of a funding agreement. Susan will propose a meeting date.

7. Nov 23rd 2021 Meeting Agenda

1. Virtual Meeting Advisory
2. Adrea Becerra- Acton Sustainability Director- Apr 22nd 2022 Earth Day Ag Comm Table
3. Citizen's Concerns
4. Approval of Nov 30th minutes
5. Extended Protection for Morrison Farm
6. New Property in Consideration
7. Date for Stonefield Farm Walking Trail on Site Meeting with SVT, ACT, Ag Comm and Boston Area Gleaners (BAG)
8. Comprehensive Agricultural Plan
9. Next Meeting Agenda

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 PM

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>