



TOWN OF ACTON AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes 9 Feb, 2021

6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Present: Morene Bodner, 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

Regular Business:

Heidi convened the meeting at 6:20 PM and stated the meeting must adjourn well before 7:30PM so we all have time to watch Bettina's presentation on tonight's CBS "Chronical".

1 The virtual meeting advisory was read in its entirety

2 Citizen's Concerns

There were no citizen concerns raised

3 Approval of the Jan 12 2021 Ag Comm meeting and Jan 30 Morrison Farm Walk minutes:

Both minutes were unanimously approved by roll call vote.

4 Expanded Protection for The Morrison Farm Property (see linked documents)

Morene reported on her discussion with neighboring towns regarding preservation of historic buildings and made a recommendation that the best path forward would be to form a 501 C3 non-profit that would serve as "Friends of Morrison Farm", sell the house and possibly the barn to this non-profit who would then restore and maintain it. The property accompanying the buildings would be minimal and an easement on the driveway would be provided for access to the community gardens. The restoration could be complete so the buildings could be used in the normal way or it could be partial so as to preserve the outer appearance and historic presence without being fully functional. There is a town precedent for holding historic properties in non-profits in a similar way. It is believed that removing the responsibility for the house from the town would help in the ultimate goal of getting an APR or CR applied to the remaining Morrison property. The agreed upon next step is to form a working group that would assemble a 501 C3 board composed of representatives from the various Acton Historical groups, the community gardens, Ag Comm, Cons Comm, etc. Morene will lead this working group, Susan suggested that Morene might get valuable inputs from The Acton Historical Society on the ins and outs of managing historical buildings and might also get useful information from the people who set up the Iron Works Farm non-profit.

- 5 **Farm Signs:** Pat reviewed the BOS version of the proposed farm supportive signage at town entry points. The consensus was to add a small tractor picture to the sign and go forward with the presentation. Bettina will get a slot on the BOS agenda. (see linked documents)
- 6 **New Property in Consideration:** Susan mentioned that Andy Magee has requested the Ag Comm attend the Tuesday 8:00 PM 23rd Feb Community Preservation Committee Virtual Meeting support the full \$400k funding request for the Stonefield Farm APR. Bettina will check on exactly when we should attend and provide the Zoom Link.
- 7 **Agricultural Plan Development:** We have an outline and Bettina has ideas on how to start adding to this. She will get these thoughts together for the next board meeting.
- 8 **Mar 9th 2021 Meeting Agenda**
 - Virtual Meeting Advisory
 - 1. Citizen's Concerns
 - 2. Approval of Jan 9th minutes
 - 3. Extended Protection for Morrison Farm
 - 4. Farm Signs
 - 5. New Property in Consideration
 - 6. Ag Plan Development Next
 - 7. Meeting Agenda
- 9 **The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 PM**
- 10 **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>**