

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

*******NEW MEETING LOCATION*******

**Conference Room B
Mansfield Town Offices
7:30 p.m.**

AGENDA

February 2, 2010

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Welcome visitors
4. Approval of Minutes
5. New Business
 - Meeting Schedule-First Tuesday of the month in Conference Room B
 - Agriculture Commission Charge
 - AGvocate Program Update
 - Ag Brochure 2010
 - Presentation to Town Council
6. Old Business
 - Ag Zoning Regulations Plan of Action for revision
7. Other
8. Items for future agendas
 - Review of Ag Leases
 - Presentation to Town Council
9. Adjournment

MANSFIELD AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
DRAFT Minutes of January 5, 2010 meeting
Mansfield Community Center
Arts and Crafts Room

1. Chairman Al Cyr, called the meeting to order at 7:35.
2. PRESENT: Al Cyr, Charlie Galgowski, Bill Palmer, Kathleen Paterson, Ed Wazer, Vicky Wetherell, Jennifer Kaufman (staff).
3. Minutes of the November 4, 2009, meeting were approved.

Old Business

4. Agriculture Zoning Regulations

Jennifer has sent the current regulations to Joan Nichols (Ct. Farm Bureau) for review. The committee asked Jennifer to send their proposed regs to Joan, also. We also requested 1) that Joan attend the committee's March meeting to discuss her suggestions and 2) she send us a copy of her comments beforehand for our information. Charlie has reviewed Guilford's zoning regulations, which included statements of the *intent* of each regulation. The committee will discuss these regs at their March meeting.

The committee is considering making further revisions after the March meeting, than asking for review by others. Examples: Joyce Meader (Extension) and a land-use lawyer familiar with agriculture issues. A forum to solicit public input was also suggested as part of preparing these revisions before forwarding them to PZC for review.

New Business

5. Election of Chair and Secretary-Al was elected chair; Vicky was elected secretary.
6. New Members

Jennifer has contacted a local farmer about membership and also FFA about a student representative.

7. Agriculture Committee Charge

The committee reviewed its duties as stated in the Town Clerk's records. This charge was established when the committee was established in the 1990's, and the committee will consider updates at the February meeting.

8. Meeting Dates

The committee considered alternative date and place to meet, and Jennifer will research.

9. Town Leases

Al asked that the committee review the current leases on town-owned farmland. This was scheduled for the February meeting.

10. AGvocate program

Jennifer informed us that the AGvocate program received more funding, and four towns will be added to the program. The committee agreed to update the Town's application and recommend that it be resubmitted. The application will be available in March.

11. Presentation to the Town Council

The committee reviewed a general open space presentation being proposed by the Open Space Presentation Committee. Some changes were suggested for this presentation. The committee also discussed the need for a separate presentation by the Agriculture Committee about issues beyond the general presentation, including a proposed update of the committee's charge and an AGvocate application. Discussion of the Agriculture Committee presentation will continue at the February meeting.

12. Meeting adjourned at 9:30.

An Ordinance Creating the Agriculture Commission

Brooklyn Ordinance
adopted 12/30/2009

ESTABLISHED: By Ordinance adopted

CHARGE/DUTIES: The Agriculture Commission shall be an advisory board with the following charges and duties:

A. Information - To serve as a conduit between non-profit agencies, civic organizations, municipal boards and commissions, elected officials, and local farmers. To serve as an agricultural clearinghouse by creating an informational website and map of local farms. To chart land use in Brooklyn to support a balance between agriculture, preservation and other land uses.

B. Education - To recommend changes to language and practices across town departments and other boards and commissions regarding a local definition for agriculture, farming and farms. To educate town government about agricultural laws and legal issues regarding farm machinery, buildings and operations. To provide information and guidance on agriculture-related issues—such as zoning, inland wetland, public works and others—to town departments and other boards and commissions as necessary. To act as a sounding board / provide review / to town departments, boards and commissions concerning the impact of proposed town policies on farms. To support young farmers and new farmers. To support local, regional and state vocational agriculture education programs.

C. Conflict Resolution - To serve as a resource for information and non-binding advice for residents, established town committees and departments concerning the resolution of agriculture related conflicts.

D. Economic Opportunities - To identify innovative opportunities for farming additional lands in Brooklyn. To promote opportunities for residents and local businesses to support and value farming. To serve as a conduit between non-profit agencies, funders, and local farmers. To work to create a climate that supports the economic viability of farming as a career in Brooklyn. To create a sustainable agriculture community. To secure the land base necessary for future agricultural uses.

ELECTED/APPOINTED: Appointed by the Board of Selectmen

MEMBERSHIP: The Agricultural Commission will consist of 5 members and 3 alternates. Members and alternates will be appointed by the Board of Selectmen in accordance to Connecticut General Statutes and Town Charter. Insofar as practical, members appointed shall be representative of all groups interested in the management, protection and regulation of agriculture as defined by Connecticut General Statutes 1-1q, particularly those directly involved in agriculture. The failure of a voting member to attend four (4) consecutive meetings of the commission shall constitute cause for the Board of Selectmen to remove the member and fill the position thus vacated. The annual organizational meeting for the Agricultural Commission shall be held on the first regular meeting in January of each year. A chairman, vice chairman and a secretary will be elected and will serve for a term of one year.

LENGTH OF TERM: Staggered 3-year terms, with initial appointments to be 3 members for 3 years and 2 members for 2 years; 1 alternate to be for 3 years and 2 alternates for 2 years. Members of the Commission shall serve without pay.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This Ordinance shall become effective fifteen (15) days following publication of its approval thereof in a newspaper having a circulation in the Town of Brooklyn.

Not yet passed

(DRAFT)
Town of Thompson
The Thompson Agriculture Committee

ESTABLISHED:

Mission:

CHARGE/DUTIES: The Agriculture Committee shall be an advisory board with the following charges and duties:

General

- a. To foster sustainable agriculture in Thompson.
- b. To serve as a conduit between local farmers and non-profit agencies, civic organizations, municipal boards and commissions, elected officials, and non-farm residents.
- c. To advocate for agriculture before land use commissions.
- d. To act a resource for agricultural information.

Education and Outreach

- a. To increase awareness of agricultural enterprises in the community.
- b. To provide information to town government about agricultural laws and legal issues.
- c. To promote the value of agriculture viability in the areas of employment, property taxes, environment and open space preservation.
- d. To provide information and guidance on agriculture-related issues—such as zoning, inland wetland, public works and others—to town departments and other boards and commissions as necessary.
- e. To support young farmers by supporting local, regional, and state vocational agricultural education programs.
- f. To recognize and support new farming operations and farms.

Conflict Resolution

- a. To assist in limiting farm and non-farm conflicts

Economic Opportunities

- a. To identify opportunities for expanding agriculture in Thompson.
- b. To promote opportunities for residents and local businesses to support farming.
- c. To provide information regarding available financial support related to agricultural viability..
- d. To foster a climate that supports agricultural viability in Thompson.

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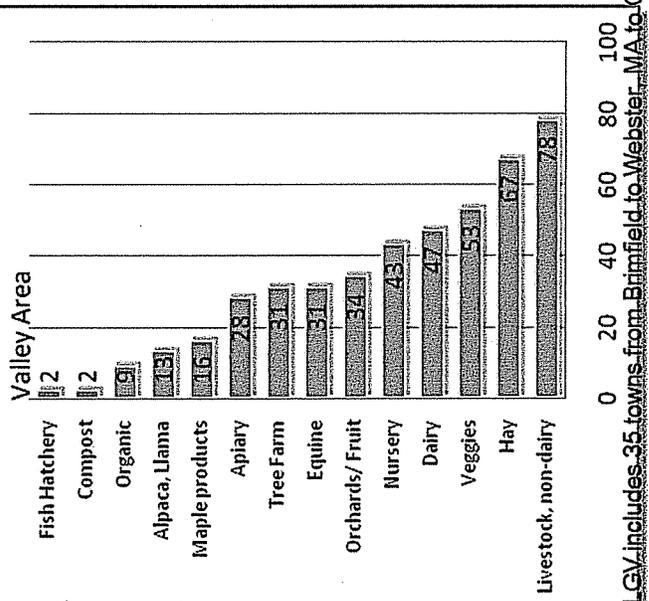
LENGTH OF TERM: Staggered 3-year terms, with initial appointments to be 3 members for 3 years and 2 members for 2 years; 1 alternate to be for 3 years and 2 alternates for 2 years. Members of the Committee shall serve without pay.

*Results of Farm Survey completed
in Fall 2009 by the Last Green
Valley*

The Last Green Valley non-profit organization's mission is to pass legislation and develop strategies to protect our land and water resources, educate the public and increase the economic importance of agriculture in this area. We understand that ecological health, preserving rural character, and fostering sustainable economic growth is inextricably linked to the economic and social health of our communities and the quality of life of their residents. A few months ago we conducted a Farm Survey asking you questions about you agricultural business. Here's what we found:

- * Of the 556 Farms we found, 331 or 60% of you responded to our calls.
- * Of those 331 farms 228 produce food.
- * 56% of you said you might participate in a Last Green Valley Organization for Agri-businesses.
- * 145 - 150 are thinking about expanding or diversifying.
- * 38% of you feel a need to educate people about the process and importance of farming.
- * 28% are dealing with land stewardship and preservation issues.
- * 23% agri-businesses are looking to cooperate and/or network in some useful way.
- * 11% of the agri-business are looking at green technology and more efficient ways to use resources.

Types of Farms in The Last Green Valley Area



LGVA includes 35 towns from Brimfield to Webster, MA to Coventry through to Voluntown CT.