

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
Minutes
February 2, 2016

Members present: Al Cyr, Ed Hall, Susan Mitchell, Vicky Wetherell, Bryan Kielbania, Jason Stearns, Jennifer Kaufman (staff), David Freudmann and Charlie Galgowski (guest)

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:35, Nancy was appointed acting secretary
2. Jennifer was appointed acting secretary
3. Roll call was conducted
4. Jason Stearns was welcomed as a new member.
5. Minutes of the January 5, 2016 were approved.
6. Public Comment- Because there were two members of the public present, the committee agreed to move public comment to the beginning of the agenda.
 - a. David Freudmann addressed the committee regarding Project Greenspace, which he strongly opposes. He believes that this proposal is bad public policy. He feels that the better way to fund open space purchases is to bond it or put it into the general fund, like Mansfield currently does. This way it is transparent and the whole town can agree whether or not this is a priority. He feels that it is not fair to young families moving into Town and may encourage more conversion of single family residences to rentals because the investment landlords may be the only ones who would be able to pay the additional conveyance fee. He also feels that there may be unintended consequences for towns who choose not to enact this fee, as it may count against them when applying for grants.
 - b. Charlie Galgowski presented a potential compromise for the Ravine Road, which may satisfy the needs of the farm, while keeping the road open. These comments were forwarded to staff for review.
7. Old Business
 - a. *Ravine Road Follow-Up*-Jennifer reported that the Town Council will be conducting a field trip on the site on Saturday, February 6th. The Town Council will most likely have the Ravine Road as a formal agenda item at their meeting of February 22.
 - b. *Regional Agricultural Commission/Committee Meeting on Feb. 9th*- Jennifer has contacted the other Towns and folks agreed that they would like to postpone the February meeting and reconvene, perhaps in May.
 - c. *Farmer's Forum- March 9th*- Jennifer has sent out a "Save the Date." The head of floriculture agreed to do tours of the facility starting at 6:30 pm. The committee discussed the agenda, which will include a discussion of the Ag Com accomplishments over the past year and gaining feedback from the Ag Community as to their needs for the future. Al will send an agenda to Jennifer for drafting. The committee will make calls to folks in the Ag brochure to encourage attendance.

- d. *Collaboration with Economic Dev. Commission*- Jennifer confirmed that the committee will meet with EDC Thursday, March 24th. Stacey Stearns will give a presentation of the dairy industry in CT and Paul Brody will discuss Mountain Dairy's. Members of the Ag Committee will be there to encourage future collaboration with EDC, perhaps a local food event in Mansfield.
- e. *Town Leases*- Jennifer reported on Tom Wells' lease. She spoke with Vivian Felton from NRCS who is working with Tom on a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan for his whole operation. She stated that NRCS would be willing to do a conservation plan for the two town fields. Jennifer contacted Tom and told him that a conservation plan would be required in order for him to continue with the lease. Tom has no problem with this and will forward this to the committee when it is completed by NRCS, which should be very soon.
- f. *Soil Health Workshop*-Jennifer updated the committee on Art Talmadge's offer to host a soil health workshop at Cranberry Hill Farm. Jennifer and Art talked about two workshops one at the farm and one at the Town Hall. They include:
 - ***"Transitioning to no Till Vegetable Production"*** offered to home gardeners and farmers. Art and Sherry would give a presentation and give a tour of their farm. Art would like to do this at 6 pm on Thursday, June 2 with a rain date of June 16th. We could have people bring a dish to share and Mansfield could spring for drinks and cookies.
 - A separate workshop (not at his farm) could be ***"Soils 101: How to protect your soils and why it matters"***. This would be geared towards regulatory officials and interested others. Ray Covino could give a primer on soils and look at his rainfall simulator. We could have this workshop in the fall.
- g. Appointment of a permanent secretary. Jennifer discussed the need to appoint a permanent secretary. This will be considered at the next meeting.
- h. Vicky is working on the signage and this will be presented to the Traffic Authority in late February.

8. New Business

- a. *Trespassing*-The committee discussed the need to address the need and perhaps educate people about the danger/nuisance/violation of private property rights caused by trespassing on farmland.
- b. Project Green Space- The committee decided to recommend that the Town Council stay silent on this issue. It is clear that there is not support from the committees at this time and that generally residents want to encourage towns to bond or include open space acquisition in the Town budget rather than using a conveyance fee.
- c. Workshop with CT Farm Bureau Co-sponsored with AGvocate March 30th 7-9 pm. The committee was not clear on what the workshop would be on and decided that it would be best for the committee to focus their efforts on other projects.

9. Communications- None
10. Future Agendas- The committee would like to have Amy Paterson of the CT Land Conservation Council to attend a joint meeting of the various commissions/committees to discuss how best to approach the issue of permanent preservation of Town Open Space with the Town Council. Jennifer will coordinate.
11. Other-None.
12. Meeting Adjourned at 9:05