

Durham Agricultural Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 17th, 2015
7:00 PM, 3RD Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

Members: Fred Mastele, Roger Passavant, Warren Herzig, Melissa Dziurgot, David Zemelsky

Alternates: Dick Porter, Joe Pasquale

1. Meeting was called to order by Fred Mastele at 7:08 pm and roll call was taken.
2. Motion was made by Melissa Dziurgot and seconded by Warren Herzig to accept the November 17th, 2015 Meeting Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Motion was made by Melissa Dziurgot and seconded by David Zemelsky to accept the October 20th, 2015 Meeting Minutes. The motion passed with one abstention, Warren, who had not been at that meeting.
4. Public Comment - there was no public comment.
5. Old Business

Prior to starting on the current agenda items, the Commission referred back to the October 20th 2015 AgComm meeting, which had been attended by the Durham Board of Selectmen and the Tax Assessor, and at which there had been a lengthy discussion of property tax issues related to the Town's farmers. Many of the AgComm members present this evening wondered if now was the time to approach the Board of Selectmen regarding the additional \$100,000 exemptions for farm machinery and buildings mentioned in Public Act 14-33 which became effective on October 1st, 2014.

Durham Grown Sign

Roger reported that he and Dick had installed the first four signs: one at the southern end of Route 77, one at the southern end of Route 79, and one each at the north and south Town borders on Route 17. Dick suggested making the next order of signs reflective so they would be more visible at night. Everyone agreed with this idea. Roger said he would check the pricing for reflective signs. The additional signs will not be ordered until next fiscal year.

Coginchaug River

Warren reported that he had not been to any meetings lately and therefore had no update for the Commission. Dick reported on an Environmental Summit that will be hosted by Senator Ted Kennedy Jr. on December 3rd, 2015. Dick and Roger are planning to attend.

Guilford Road Properties

At the October 20th 2015 AgComm meeting, Laura Francis had mentioned that she would like to see a Management Plan drawn up by the AgComm outlining what work and maintenance should be done on the Guilford Road Properties. The Commission began discussing such a Plan at the current meeting. Roger suggested a site walk to evaluate existing conditions and develop a needs and objectives list. All Commission members agreed. After some discussion it was decided that the site walk would take place on Tuesday, November 24th, 2015 at 11:00 am.

Plan of Conservation and Development

Joe reported that the Planning and Zoning Commission has yet to do anything in regards to a POCD. Fred reported on, and had copies of, an Agricultural POCD for the Town of Ashford.

Deerfield Farm

The matter of the well and water filtration system was discussed again briefly by the Commission. At a previous AgComm meeting, the consensus had been that the landlord should be responsible for providing potable water. At this evening's meeting, Roger reported that he had also spoken with Melynda Naples in regards to the maintenance expense of the newly installed water filtration system. All the Commission members felt that the Town of Durham, as landlord, should also be responsible for the maintenance expense of the filtration system.

6. New Business

Melissa reported that the annual meeting of the Connecticut Farm Bureau was going to be held on Friday, November 20th 2015. Melissa had planned on raising some of our property tax issues at the CFBA meeting. Fred thought it might be possible to get the CFBA to pass some sort of Resolution supporting our position on these issues.

Fred brought up the topic of the 2016 Agricultural Commission Meeting Schedule. The Commission discussed the subject briefly and it was decided to keep the meetings on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. There was one concern raised regarding the September meeting date and its close proximity to the Durham Fair time.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion was made by Melissa Dziurgot and seconded by Warren Herzig. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm.