



MINUTES
AGRICULTURE COMMISSION
MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2019
EAST HADDAM MUNICIPAL TOWN OFFICES
MEETING ROOM 1
7:00 P.M.
REGULAR MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 1903 by Ronald Gross. In attendance were Peter Dean (by phone), Carleen Quinn, Ron Distefano, Keith Wilson, Susan Downs, Mark Henderson, Bonnie Buongiorne, and Ronald Gross. A motion to approve the proposed agenda was made by Ronald Distefano, seconded by Bonnie Buongiorne and passed unanimously. Likewise, a motion to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2019 meeting was made by Peter Dean, seconded by Ronald Distefano, and was passed unanimously.

Chairman Gross discussed the successful prior efforts to assist Shaleen Thody with the development of the Middle School garden project, and suggested that the Commission should reach out to see how we could further assist with its continued growth. He also suggested that we should try once again to involve the VoAg program and Ms. Buongiorne offered to contact the VoAg director at the high school to see if we could have that program work with the Commission; this was tried last year without success, but it was unanimously felt that it would be worth a second attempt.

Once again the Community Garden development and use was discussed

- i. Further actions to improve use
 1. Bringing in and spreading manure from cattle and horse farms. Mark Henderson stopped at the town garage with no success – no one was there. He will continue to try and talk to someone re: spreading. Emmett saw no issues about it. Ron Gross called Beth Lunt, who said that the hill is not topsoil but the old garbage landfill. Mr. Henderson felt that the manure would not have any pesticides remaining when it breaks down. The idea was to double the size of the area being used and spread for that so that we can increase the useable reclaimed spoil 2-3 acres at a time. If we can't find a plow we could just harrow. It was suggested that we should stockpile it inside the fence for use by those who have plots. We will need the OK to do so, and that will need to come from Lunt and/or Ventres. The thought was that the town crew could move the manure from where it is to the Garden. Dr. Gross will ask Ventres and Lunt. Mr. Henderson will speak with Rob Smith, and Mr. Distefano can move his pile on his own. It will need to be determined where the pile should be placed; optimally it should be best placed near the current plots, i.e. near the tanker.
 2. Plowing and harrowing – see above
- ii. Possibility of free plots to seniors – Dr. Gross will have to call Ventres. Offer plots for free but any and all donations will be gratefully accepted.
- b. “Giving Garden” discussions: Mr. Smith and Mr. Parker. Susan Downs was wondering about other groups (FFA, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Eagle Scouts, Young Lions) that would get credit for working this garden. Carlene Quinn suggested discussions with the new Park & Recreation Dept. head – she will get in touch with her (Lisa Conroy) and float the idea of getting the Giving Garden on the program of the P&R, getting the youth to work with the seniors. Bonnie Bounqiorne will contact the FFA (Heidi Peas) and Ron

Distefano will contact his 2 nephews. Ms. Buongiorno asked about having a table at the “Celebrating East Haddam” on April 27, rain date of April 28. Booth costs \$50. She felt it would be a good idea. There are sponsors for non-profits. Susan Downs and Mark Henderson will attend. We would team up with the Ray of Light booth – she will work on getting a booth right next to hers. We should promote the activities that we are working on as well as the web site. We need to finalize plans at the April meeting.

- c. Future social media posts – need “stuff” from Mark.
- 2. Old Business – Who will fill the tanker? Gross will call Emmett.
- 3. Comments from the public: None

The meeting was adjourned at 1956.

Respectfully submitted,
Ronald I. Gross, MD, FACS