

Agriculture Commission

Monday, June 4, 2012
Town Office Annex
7:00 PM

Minutes

1. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the East Haddam Agriculture Commission was called to order by Chairman Harvey Thomas on Monday, June 4, 2012 at 7:10 PM at the Town Hall Annex.

2. Attendance

Regular members- Present: Scot Mackinnon, Peter Dean, Harvey Thomas, Dennie Burak, and Jessica Stone. **Alternate members-** Present: Peg Carlson, Linda Stuhlman and Marianne Halpin. Also in attendance youth representative, Heather Johnson.

3. Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the May 7, 2012 meeting were approved with corrected possessives and spelling.
Motion: Burak Second: Stone

4. Liaison Reports:

A. FFA Students

New youth representative from Future Farmers of America, Heather Johnson was present. Ms. Johnson reported on the school year's VO-AG and FFA activities which included fundraisers, leadership conferences, volunteer activities, career development programs, and Relay for Life.

B. Note from May 22 Meeting with Vo Ag/FFA

Chairman Thomas suggested that to better serve FFA's needs, the Ag. Commission should make

some helpful suggestions. Ms. Stone inquired about the maple sugar shack idea that was listed. Mr. Dean noted an interest on the part of the students and vo-ag. faculty in starting an instructional maple syrup operation. (The Ray Foundation has already provided \$5,000 for the upstart.) It was suggested by Ms. Stone that the Ag. Commission could help students source a pre-existing sugar shack to be re-located to the school property. Mr. Mackinnon suggested the Ag. Commission could help students identify a stand of sugar maples on or near the high school property to get started. Chairman Thomas added, "- or we could find someone who already has a sugar shack to allow kids a way to start."

C. Other- Right to Farm Ordinance

Chairman Thomas suggested a sub-committee be formed to help write a Right to Farm ordinance with our "definition of farming" text included from our mission statement. Sub-committee members : Chairman Thomas, Scot Mackinnon, Jessica Stone, and student representative, Heather Johnson. Chairman Thomas will schedule the sub-committee meetings for the month of June. Mr. Mackinnon agreed to serve with the understanding that a completed document would be ready by the July Ag. Commission meeting.

5. Ongoing Projects

A. Farmer's Market

Preparations are underway for the first East Haddam Farmers' Market on June 20th.

B. Community Agriculture Center

Jessica Stone reported that work continues with a heavy focus on writing grants for structures at the Harris Farm with an August 1st and a November deadline.

C. Status of Grant Applications

Jessica Stone reported that, in addition to regular brush clearing at Harris, the primary focus of grant writing efforts is the STEAP grant. The Chairman reported that the Cooperative Letter of Agreement for the Community Farms Preservation Program was signed by the state Agriculture Commissioner.

D. Website Management

Jessica Stone said that she will have some new proposals to add to the website project for the next regular meeting.

6. Future Projects

In process.

8. Audience of Citizens/Guests:

No audience of citizens. But Chairman proposed a letter of support for the latest open space initiative. Motion: Harvey Thomas Second: Peter Dean Approved unanimously with one abstention from Dennie Burak.

9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Dean

Second: Burak

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Scot Mackinnon