

# **AGRICULTURE COMMISSION**

**Monday, June 3, 2013**

**Town Office Annex**

## **MINUTES**

1. Call to order: 7:06
2. Attendance: Scot Mckinnon (Reg), Harvey Thomas (Reg), Linda Stuhlman (Reg), Marianne Halpin (Alt) and Jeff Savitsky (Alt).
3. Chairman Mckinnon appointed Ms. Halpin to vote in the regular member open position and Mr. Savitsky to vote for Mr. Dean.
4. Approval of Minutes: The May 2013 minutes were approved With corrections as follows:
  - Center for Community Agriculture: A grant for \$20,000 for fencing has been received and accepted at Town Meeting on March 28, 2013. In addition, a STEAP grant for \$431,200 to develop an agricultural business incubator and community farm has been received from the state and a gift of \$16,000 for a timber frame garden shed has been received from Consumer Union. The later two items have yet to be accepted at Town Meeting. Motion: Halpin, Second: Savitsky
5. Membership: Mr. Mckinnon proposed Ms. Halpin for regular commission membership. He will forward this request to the Board of Selectrmen.
6. Liaison Reports: None
7. Ongoing Projects:
  - A. Farmers' Market: Messers. Dean Savitsky and Thomas met with First Selectman Mark Walter on May 31. It was agreed that:
    - Mr. Walter would see that Mr Savitsky as Market Manager would have access to the Farmers' Market banking account and clarify the accounting protocol with the Finance Director.

- The Farmers' Market Committee may authorize the Market Manager to spend certain funds on behalf of the Committee. This would take a vote of the Committee.
- The Market Manager still needs help, especially with publicity.
- At the time of the meeting, the Board of Selectmen had appointed 3 members to the Farmers' Market Committee. It was anticipated that a fourth member would be appointed at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

B. Website Management: No Report.

C. Regional Agriculture Council: A Regional Agriculture Council has been formed including the same towns as are in the Lower Connecticut River Council of Governments. Jessica Stone is the East Haddam representative. Ms. Stone has agreed to report to the East Haddam Agriculture Commission on the Council's activities.

D. Agriculture Roundtable: In order to encourage interest and participation in local agriculture, it was suggested that the Commission facilitate some sort of agriculture oriented event involving high school and middle school students. Ms. Halpin volunteered to discuss this concept with the Vo Ag faculty and FFA chapter.

E. Future Projects: Since oversight of the Farmers' Market has been removed by the Board of Selectmen to the Farmers' Market Committee and the activities of the Center for Community Agriculture will apparently be directed by a development authority, it was suggested by Mr. Thomas that the Agriculture Commission look at other activities that it might pursue in furtherance of its charge and responsibilities. The committee that studied and recommended that an East Haddam Agriculture Commission be established identified a number of possible projects and it was agreed that list should be circulated to the Commission.

7. Audience of Citizens/Guests: George Scrivener.

8. Adjournment: 8:05 Motion: Halpin, Second: Mckinnon

## Agriculture Commission

### Possible Projects

- Develop a history of East Haddam agriculture
- Hold seminars, courses on organic and/or local food production
- Establish a community garden at local schools to create excitement and demand for fresh, local schools
- Organize art show featuring local agriculture as a theme
- Promote and support local community gardens
- Promote purchase of local foods by our school system for school lunch program
- Identify and find solutions for neighbors and farmers concerns with each other
- Create network of local beekeepers and promote honey sales
- Spring maple syrup festival
- Local foods cookbook to raise awareness of local agriculture
- Economic Development Commission sponsors a chowder cook-off...why not a locally grown foods cook-off?
- Promote and support local Community Supported Agriculture
- Develop a local brand: "Lower Connecticut Valley Produce" or "East Haddam Grown"
- Promote farmer's market
- Fall Harvest Festival
- Farm to local restaurant sales
- "Locovor" contest
- Serve as a liaison between landowners who would like to lease land for agriculture and those who would like to farm
- Food Kitchen = ??
- Advocate for farmland as open space