

Webex meeting recording: Agricultural Commission Meeting-20231115 0125-1

Recording link:

<https://woodbridgect.webex.com/woodbridgect/ldr.php?RCID=3118103511d7bcd71ba714536469456c>

The November 14, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Woodbridge Agricultural Commission was convened sat 8:20 p.m. by Vice Chair Andrea Urbano via WebEx.

Present: Vice Chair Andrea Urbano, Leland Torrance, Kristyna Hulland, Steve Munno. Due to technical difficulties, Chris Sorensen was able to hear the proceedings, but was not able to participate.

Present for staff: Geraldine Shaw, Clerk

MINUTES

The minutes of the October 10, 2023, meeting, were approved as amended (Torrance – Munno). The amendment was to add that Ms. Urbano would contact the police department re the number of complaints of trespass on leased Town property/farmland.

As to the matter of trespass, Mrs. Shaw stated that she has been told those leasing the Town property may erect no trespass signs at their own expense.

APPROVE SCHEDULE OF REGULAR MEETINGS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2024

The Commission noted that the entire membership may change as Mr. Sorensen, Mr. Torrance, and Ms. Hulland's term ends December 31, 2023, and Ms. Urbano and Mr. Munno have been elected to the Board of Selectmen and will resign from the Commission.

The Commission agreed to continue with the current schedule of the second Tuesday of the month at 8:00 p.m. with the caveat that the schedule will be reviewed at the January 9, 2024, meeting and any changes filed with the Town Clerk prior to January 31.

DISCUSSION OF ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE NEW BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Ms. Urbano said that she believes there is value in the Agricultural Commission having a grasp of the land resource, farmland soils, and the agricultural/conservation value of certain Town owned properties as it relates the Agricultural Commission's mission. The group also agreed it was important for it to work with other land use boards, such as the Conservation Commission and the Commission on the Use of Publicly Owned Properties to have a role in the proposed/recommended use of Town properties.

- the Commission agreed that CUPOP's review will be a public resource for the Town and commissions, that it would wait to review the results of the analysis before recommending an expansion of the list of land to be leased for farming
- discussed concern for the remaining privately held historic farms and the Commission's role in advocating for farms or partial preservation in the event of development
- remind the new Commission of its enabling Ordinance and mission
- continue to advocate for extended leases
- offer support and input to the other intersecting commissions – Conservation and CUPOP
- continue to seek ways to support and encourage farming and agricultural businesses

DISCUSSION OF COMMUNICATION FROM TIM AUSTIN, CONSERVATION COMMISSION CHAIR

Regarding Mr. Morrill's request to lease a parcel of Town owned property not on the list for leasing. Mr. Austin communicated his request that before the Commission considers supporting Mr. Morrill's request to the Board of Selectmen, or any other request for Town land to farm, it contact the Conservation Commission as they may have plans for trails, etc.

In the attending correspondence the Clerk explained that current protocol for the change of use of Town Owned property is presented to the Board of Selectmen and then if the Board wishes to consider it, they refer it to the land use commissions/agencies for a report.

The Commission discussed the overlapping interests of other boards and commissions re use of Town Owed property and expressed its desire to work in tandem to avoid competing plans and/or recommendations offered to the Board of Selectmen.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE DECEMBER 12, 2023, MEETING

Report re discussion with the Police Department re the trespass issue – Ms. Urbano

ADJOURNMENT

As it was agreed that there were no other matters to bring up for discussion, on a non-debatable motion by Mr. Munno, seconded by Ms. Hulland, the meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk