

Pomfret Agricultural Commission Thursday, Dec. 17, 2015 Pomfret Senior Center

Meeting Time 7:00 pm

In Attendance

James Rowley Chairman

James Labbe Vice Chairman

Adam Squire Secretary

John Wolchesky

Bill Wood

Citizens in Attendance

First Selectman Craig Baldwin

Lance Sistare

Daniel Nagey

Meeting Opened at 7:05

I. Regular Meeting

A. Open Regular Meeting/Roll Call

B. Approval of Minutes of Dec 17 2015

Motion was made by James Rowley to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved

C. Citizen participation and Conversation

All three citizen participants contributed throughout the meeting

II. Current Business

A. Pomfret Farmers Market 2016 proposed dates (July 17, 24 Aug. 14, 21 Sept 11, 18) Town Calendar date Approval

After a brief discussion with input from participating vendors Bill Wood, John Wolchesky, and Adam Squire it was agreed that the earlier dates of 7/17, 8/14, and 9/11 were favored.

Chairman Rowley committed to following up with the town to confirm availability for the rec park.

B. Pomfret Grown Brochure (PCS printer update)

There was discussion surrounding a full revamp of the Pomfret Grown Brochure. This conversation moved in tandem with the goal of creating a strategic brand identity for pomfret agriculture that could be used as a general marketing platform. This goal was co-created with the input of First Selectman Baldwin as a vehicle for supporting a vibrant agricultural business sector within the community. The goal of this effort is designed to bolster patronage of ag based businesses by citizens of Pomfret and the surrounding communities while potentially marketing Pomfret as a destination for people interested in agritourism. Mr. Baldwin offered resources to support in creating and editing the copy for the new brochure. It was also suggested that the old lay out, graphic design, and color pallet should be revamped. Chairman Rowley offered to be the impresario of collecting content from farms that were not represented in the old brochure and any potential edits from farms that are presently represented. There was some brief discussion of a mission statement or tagline to compliment the effort.

Note; Within this agenda item there was also a conversation surrounding grant opportunities.

Lance Sistare offered some perspective on a grant writer acquaintance and the abundance of opportunities that are available for local farmers. There was interest in having this acquaintance come and address the commission at a future meeting.

C. Plan of Conservation and Development (E. Chase to talk to W. Hinchman on status)

This item was tabled as E. Chase was not present for comment

III New Business

A. Upcoming Workshops

Tabled until we get closer to the spring

B. Education and Outreach(Pomfret Community School)

Tabled for future discussion

C. Tax exemption for Farm Buildings with Bonnie Duncan

Bonnie Duncan was not present but Mr. Baldwin did offer perspective on the initiative. While the initiative is a worthwhile pursuit to provide some modest tax relief for farmers the current environment is not conducive to forwarding the initiative. The First Selectman expressed that he would further the initiative if the commission desired, culminating in a vote at a town meeting but that there was a distinct possibility the tax exemption would not be received favorably and would be rejected. There was discussion surrounding forwarding the initiative despite the unfavorable environment for its acceptance. After some back and forth it seemed the consensus was to hold for the now.

D. MSU and Pomfret Grown Market Store discussion

Chairman Rowley shared with the group his initial due diligence on the feasibility of a mobile slaughtering facility that could be used by farmers in the area. James's initial findings indicate that the capital expenses associated with fabricating, staffing, and licensing such a unit would be prohibitive to moving forward. There was also further discussion surrounding a Co-op style retail location that could prominently feature Pomfret produced products as well as products from other local producers. In the abstract this idea carries allot of enthusiasm within the commission. The next steps is a strategic planning process culminating in a business plan, and securing venture capital to actualize the concept. There could also be grant opportunities to support such an effort. A consensus was achieved that the former Steakum's facility would not be viable for a retail outlet given its location.

IV. Other Business

A. Future Agenda Items (Ag night open house, The History of Farms in Pomfret)

Tabled for future discussion

B. Meeting Date-Jan 21st

Meeting date accepted

C. General Discussion

There was general discussion throughout the meeting

V. Citizens Comments

Citizens participated throughout the meeting

VI. Adjournment

Meeting ended 8:38

Meeting Minutes Accepted Jan. 21 2016

Respectfully Submitted



Adam Roy Squire

Secretary Pomfret Agricultural Commission