Pomfret Agricultural Commission Thursday, Feb 18th, 2016 Pomfret Senior Center
Meeting Time 7:00 pm
In Attendance
James Rowley Chairman
Adam Squire Secretary
Tina Kelly
John Wolchesky
Bill Wood
Citizens in Attendance
Selectman Donna Smith
Lance Sistare
Daniel Nagey
Michael Goodenough and Anthony Main

Regular Meeting
A. Open Regular Meeting/Roll Call
Meeting opened at 7:00
B. Approval of Minutes from January 21, 2016
John Wolchesky made a motion that the minutes be accepted as submitted Bill Wood seconded the motion. The motion carried and the minutes were accepted.
C. Citizen Participation and Conversation
There was general participation throughout the meeting. Michael Goodenough and Anthony Main introduced themselves to the group and stated their interest in the commission. Anthony is exploring the possibility of purchasing the Goodenough Family farmstead which has been in the family for generations. Michael hopes to sustain the purchase through bringing the farm back into production under an indoor hydroponic model. The business plan which he presented to the group outlined several marketing avenues including wholesale, and direct marketing outlets.

II. Current Business
Paperwork filled out for the town.
Chairman Rowley confirmed that the proposed dates have been accepted by the town and the pavilion space at the rec. center is reserved.
B. Pomfret Grown Brochure info update
Chairman Rowley informed the group that many responses had been solicited and received. Once all responses from new producers or edits from those previously represented in the old brochure have been received James will connect with Joan Baldwin to start working on layout and refining the copy. John Wolchesky offered that his cousin, also named John Wolchesky was interested in being included in the brochure.
C. Plan of conservation and Development Still Waiting!
Adam Squire inquired as to what exactly the commission is waiting for? Is there a definite response from the Planning and Zoning Commission the Ag Commission is expecting or have they accepted the recommendations as submitted by former
Chairman Ellsworth Chase and have taken them under advisement with no response required?

D. May 7 Town Wide Tag Sale (Farmers Mkt. @ Rec. field with tag sale)
This agenda item had been tabled at the request of John Wolchesky to be revisited in this meeting. John decided that without the timing being right to harvest asparagus production levels would be too low to sustain a successful market.

E. Town property lease discussion
Selectman Donna Smith was present to share the draft lease language with the commission and facilitate a discussion seeking feedback from the group. The two primary concerns voiced were as follows:

Liability
Concern was expressed that the level of insurance coverage required by the town in the lease document might not be sufficient for all agricultural uses. For example there is very little liability exposure for the town when it comes to hay and corn silage, two crops that are not intended for human consumption. However leafy greens often used raw for human consumption or a product which has been linked to multiple listeria outbreaks such as cantaloupe could present a greater liability for the town thus requiring more coverage through the farmer.

Conservation Practices
The other major concern was how to craft verbiage that would ensure proper conservation practices are in place and followed by the lessee. The concern was that the existing verbiage in the draft surrounding working with the NRCS was too passive and did not ensure mandatory compliance.

III. New Business
A. Education and Outreach (Pomfret Community School)
This agenda item was revisited. Lance Sistare expressed that he had interest in having an ownership roll in a yet to be defined outreach effort.

B. Community Kitchen Co-op
Chairman Rowley provided an update on a community Kitchen effort that is underway in Woodstock. The proposed commercial kitchen could function as a coworking space among other functions.

C. Nominations for Replacement Members
It was noted that there are two seats open on the Commission, one alternate seat open as vacated by Ellsworth Chase and one full member seat open as a result of the passing of long time commission member Bradley Beeler. It was suggested that the current alternate members Bill Wood and Tina Kelly should be given the right of first refusal to become a full voting member. If either Tina or Bill would like to take on the full voting member role the commission would then have two alternate seats to fill. Tina Kelly was asked first of her interest since her tenure as an alternate has been longer than Bill’s but Tina declined. Bill Wood expressed interest in assuming the role of full voting member. The commission supported this and the recommendation was taken into consideration by Chairman Rowley. Citizens Lance Sistare and Daniel Nagey both expressed interest in joining the commission as alternate voting members. The members of the commission support their interest and this too was noted by the Chairman to recommend these appointments to the Board of Selectmen.
IV. Other Business
   A. Pomfret Grown Market Update
      There were no new developments surrounding this item of interest

V. Other Business
   A. Future Agenda Items
      Chairman Rowley put forward that the commission should do something to honor the
      memory of Bradley Beeler. The commission members resolved to meditate on an
      appropriate memorial and share ideas next meeting.
      Adam Squire suggested that we should begin to discuss future workshops since the
      spring is right around the corner.
   B. Future Meeting Date-Mar 17th
      The date was noted and accepted
   C. General Discussion
      General discussion was limited with nothing to note
VI. Citizen Comments
   No citizen comments though citizens are encouraged to participate throughout the
   meeting
VII. Adjournment
   Meeting Closed at 8:23pm

Meeting Minutes Accepted March. 17, 2016
Respectfully Submitted

Adam Roy Squire
Secretary Pomfret Agricultural Commission