

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

A. Pomfret Farmer's Market 2016 (July 17, Aug. 14 Sept. 11) Town Calendar Approved. 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