

Woodstock Agriculture Commission

Meeting Minutes from Monday, February 24, 2020

Members Present: Stewart Morse, Richard Norman, Paul Miller, Lynn Weaver, Jon Hermonot, Linda Auger. **Absent:** Doug Young.

Public Present; Emilie Hebert, Amy Monahan, Karen Swanberg.

1. **Call to order** at 1:03pm by Chair, S. Morse.

2. **Seat Alternatives:** Linda Auger and Jon Hermonot were seated as full members.

3. **Review of January 2020 minutes** – The January minutes were approved as presented.

4. **Public Participation:** E. Hebert brought up an issue about new town assessor driving sending a large tax bill to a horse farm (for the horses) just prior to the PPD deadline, for back taxes with penalties, without any prior notification. This was the first time the owners had been sent a bill. Question posed as to whether the WAC would take this subject up. Discussion: K. Swanberg to verify other items to address as they pertain to equine agriculture. S. Morse to speak with 1st Selectman once all items are presented.

5. Old Business

a. **WOLSAPF Report** – S. Morse said they need to find an alternate to replace him during the summer months. Alternate would attend meetings on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7pm.

b. **P & Z Report** – S. Morse reported that he attended the Public Hearing on Joy Road becoming a Scenic Rd. Members discussed what it means to town and Joy Rd. residents. Continuation of Public Hearing on March 5, 2020, due to one resident receiving incorrect notification. Public Hearing continuation for Subdivision on Crystal Pond Rd scheduled for March 19. Question asked about Treehouse project. S. Morse said that there is no formal proposal, therefore, no position. Reiterated WAC is advisory only. J. Hermonot asked about our role in solar in terms of prime ag vs. marginal land (on existing farms).

c. **Join Program with Conservation Commission** – Well attended and successful. Most attendees found out via social media.

d. **Other** – none

6. New Business

a. **Election of WAC officers** – Unanimously approved to keep the same. S. Morse, Chair, R. Norman Vice-chair and R. Hyde, Secretary.

b. **Senexet Grange** – S. Morse attended grange meeting on Feb. 19th. Very informative. Last weekend they had an open house. Feb. 27th is a Soup Supper. A. Monahan reported that the Grange is working on a fee schedule for events at the grange, rental of the kitchen, etc. to help with the financials. Also, she is working on updating the Woodstock Grown Brochure along with EDC. Morse to report back on this when he attends next EDC meeting. WAC can support the Grange by promoting it.

c. **2020-21 Program** – Members directed to begin thinking about topics.

d. **Celebrating Agriculture** – L. Weaver reported that the 20th anniversary event will be held on Saturday, September 26th at the Woodstock Fairgrounds.

e. **Woodstock Land Map Review** – tabled.

f. **Ct. State Agriculture Report** – P. Miller reported the bill to ban chocolate milk in restaurants was killed. Mentioned bill on Collective Bargaining for Ag workers. R. Norman announced that Ag Day at the Capitol is March 18th. L. Auger reported that the CVWA held a news conference re: new winery permit requiring no growing and implications to the CT farm wineries. Bill to change is in Environment Committee.

g. **Other** – P. Miller to speak at LIR (Learning in Retirement) at QVCC on anaerobic digestion and modern farming.

7. **Adjournment** – Meeting adjourned at 2:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Auger