

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEETING
January 18 2022

Attendance:

Members Present: Jim Dunn, Chris Hugo, Nancy Rocheleau, Maleah Gustafson

Members Absent: Tom O'Shea

Others Present: None

Call to order: 7:03pm

Minutes:

Minutes for December 14, 2021 meeting approved by unanimously (Ryan abstained). Motion made by Nancy Rocheleau and seconded by Maleah Gustafson.

Parcel Scoring Update:

An overlay with CR data layer would be helpful was feedback that Jim heard. Jim reached out to the new Town GIS person; Patrick Wood. Mr. Wood indicated he would be able to take on the task of adding a Conservation Restriction layer to the protected parcels overlay in the Town GIS. Jim will look into any updates to the list of parcels currently enrolled in Chapter 61, with the idea of determining whether the changes since 2018 have been significant enough to warrant new/additional parcel evaluations and an update to the parcel priority presentation.

Educational Series

Nancy suggested a video series where we follow a farmer around to see their operations on the ground and hear their challenges and promote this. Nancy noticed that there are challenges in selling certain vegetables at the farmer's market. Jim mentioned that Ryan McKay could be a good candidate for a farmer to video. Jim also mentioned that Chris was going to try to video Jim to take a closer look at a haying operation. Jim advised that we need to be sure that the video is educationally focused. Maleah suggested that it could be a 'What's happening in Holden' related to agriculture and other things related to our mission include open space preservation. Chris suggested a large-scale greenhouse operation or nursery. Nancy will develop the concept and storyline further. It was suggested that we could ask farmers to make their own video and we could post them to social media forums. Jim sent links to the haying videos that Chris had made a couple years ago. Jim created a list of farms in Holden that was requested last month.

New Member Search

Jim reached out again to the person who had submitted the form to volunteer. He got no response.

Outreach

Participation is increasing, albeit slowly.

Forest Management Plan Update

A forester consultant has been selected. The Town still does not wish to include all owned forest in the management plan.

Open Space and Recreation Plan

Jim reached out to the CMRPC contractor to ask if our comments had been incorporated into the final plan. He was assured that they had been, but was unable to confirm. The Commission was still unwilling to send a letter of support without verification of consideration of our comments. The State's comment on the plan should be back soon.

New Business

Farmer's Market

Nothing of significance to report.

Central MA Grown

Maleah said the membership drive will be starting January to mid-February. There will be an annual meeting and cycle.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will move to Wed, Feb 16, to accommodate a schedule conflict. The meeting will be virtual.

Adjournment

Ryan McKay motioned to adjourn, Nancy seconded, all approved at 7:48pm

Respectfully submitted:

James Dunn
Acting Secretary