

## AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEETING

### MINUTES

July 21, 2020

Attendance: Jim Dunn, Tom O'Shea, Chris Hugo, Maleah Gustafson, Ryan McKay

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

#### **MINUTES:**

Tom shared minutes of April 15, 2020 June 16, 2020 meetings. Motion to approve April minutes by Chris H., seconded by Maleah G. and were approved unanimously. June minutes were revised regarding Farmer's Market. Chris motioned to accept revised minutes, seconded by Jim, approved unanimously.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE:**

Jim shared the final results of the Chapter 61 Parcel prioritization. Maleah submitted comments through email. Chris commented that color coding was helpful. Tom suggested that we add recommendations for action by the AgComm for the Town to consider, specifically to share and proactively meet with land trusts regarding results and to inform future land protection strategies and priorities. Jim will add this into the summary document. Jim will let the Town Planner and Town Manager know about the AgComm's role with open space preservation. Jim asked that we take a look at the presentation and send specific comments. Maleah commented that each parcel was scored individually, but we do not merge together. Maybe use maps to merge them. The subcommittee used the same criteria to score parcels.

#### **EDUCATIONAL SERIES PRESENTATION:**

Discussion about a possible theme, including compost, which would be a relevant and timely for September / October timeframe. Hosting a virtual educational topic through a Zoom webinar format which could be recorded was discussed.

#### **NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT:**

Jim will reach out to candidates for committee. Maleah mentioned that there were FB posts from people that could be potential candidates.

#### **AG COMM WEBPAGE / BLOG STATUS:**

Jim sent Maleah topics for posting on FB page and mentioned that if we see anything of interest to share with Maleah for posting. Chris mentioned about sharing videos. Ryan has videos on YouTube that could be posted.

#### **AG COMM VIDEO UPDATE:**

Chris has not been able to meet with others to be interviewed as part of video. Jim mentioned about completing video questions and drone video of Jordan's farm.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Maleah sent email to Pam, but nothing new on the Master Plan objectives related to marketing or promotion. Timing is not good with COVID-19 concerns being the focus.

Jim said that there was an agro-tourism-related measure that passed in Rutland. Ryan mentioned that agro-tourism programs are meant to allow farms to do more with events, ceremonies that provide ancillary non-agricultural income and activities. Question whether Town should make assessment of income allocation for farms and whether these

measures allow farm to do something they can't already do now. Allows more on parcels that are not under an APR? Jim mentioned that the Commonwealth was in process of establishing new definition of agro-tourism as a legal mandate.

Ryan said that MDAR focus on resiliency grants and pick-your-own have been given guidelines for farms.

Tom suggested that in terms of the Master Plan, the AgComm could pick top one to three Master Plan priorities to work on. For instance, the AgComm is already working on a potential approach with land trusts and Maleah suggested agro-tourism. Jim agreed that we could try to pick two to three tasks each and then narrow down. Jim asked everyone to send candidate tasks to Jim and we can collate at our next meeting in August.

Jim asked whether member of the AgComm wanted to continue remote vs. in-person. Maleah and Tom suggested that we continue remote meetings at this point due to ongoing concerns about safety and COVID-19.

**FARMERS MARKET:**

Jim saw that banner up is up. Ryan is not participating in the Holden market. Maleah commented that she has heard that there is activity and that it may be increasing. Jim will ask about social media related to the market.

**CENTRAL MASS GROWN:**

No outdoor events planned. Maleah mentioned that an app is coming to help find food for free. Grants for farms to access online options and platform for members and will be offered tech support.

On a motion by Tom, seconded by Ryan, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Tom O'Shea  
Secretary