

HOLLISTON AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
MINUTES

Thursday, September 10, 2015

Members present: Justin Brown (associate), Tyla Doolin (associate), Janet Horne, Natalie Kent (associate), PJ Kilkelly, Tony Lulek and Paula Mark.

Member absent: Helen MacArthur

Interested Parties: Kate Canney, Mary Greendale and Dick Morse

Meeting Called to Order: Vice Chairperson, Paula Mark called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Minutes of the Last Meeting: PJ Kilkelly made a motion, seconded by Justin Brown, to accept the minutes of the August 10, 2015 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Farms Day, Community Garden and Butterfly Aviary: The prospect of having to use the rain date of September 20, 2015 was discussed. Inasmuch as the various activities going on at the farms cannot be rescheduled to the rain date, it was decided to hold the event on September 13, 2015 ó rain or shine. We will not have a rain date next year to avoid any confusion of those who are planning to attend. Justin Brown reported that he has posted all of the activities at the farms on our website. Natalie Kent reported that she has a canopy for the garden. Paula Mark reported that we have a cranberry in the bog at the garden. Tyra Doolin and the Junior AgCom will go and weed at the Community Garden. PJ Kilkelly reported that we have plants that need to be planted in the aviary. Painted Ladies and Monarchs will be released on Saturday. We do need to get some host plants as well as flowering plants. PJ stated that he is going to try to start milkweed in pots during the winter. Some of the gardeners are throwing waste over the fence which is an attraction to animals. It is a free food source. People prefer dumping rather than a compost bin. Natalie Kent reported that she has sent an e-mail relative to not harvesting vegetables soon enough. She is giving individuals the choice of other people picking for the Food Pantry. We need to get people to pick their produce. PJ Kilkelly stated that he can make two more plots for next year. Natalie stated that the next e-mail that she sends out will be relative to the community garden clean up in the fall. The older plots need to have the wooden boxes replaced. ***We need to send a letter to the Selectmen as a reminder of the snow dump issue. Mary Greendale suggested that we put colored flags on the fence so that it can easily be seen.***

Celebrate Holliston: We will have a display table again this year. ***PJ Kilkelly will supply the table and the canopy.***

Rogers Road Property: Kate Canney stated that she is looking for a long term leasing situation. Both Tony Lulek and Mary Greendale spoke relative to the best way to proceed. Are we planning to do any of the work or turn it over to a non-profit to do. A RFP has to be put out. A non-profit would come in. Having a farmer with some experience operating a farm as a part of this is important. Mary Greendale asked why aren't we setting it up? Tony Lulek stated that we

need to put together a business plan to present to the Selectmen. Mary Greendale stated that it is not an easy process. We could possibly lease the farm for the next five years while working on the non-profit. Before leasing, the CR has to be in place. Tony Lulek stated that for educational programs we need the structure as well as fund raising. ***Mary Greendale suggested that we talk to the state Department of Agriculture.*** When we are putting together a group for this project, everything should be public. The winter months is the best time to approach people. We need to be clear what we want in the end. Tony Lulek stated that we need a five to ten year plan. Mary Greendale stated that we need to have a good idea as to what we want to do with the land. Kate Canney spoke relative to rehabilitating the soil over the first few years to have good yield down the road. ***Mary Greendale stated that we should have representatives from NCRS and the Department of Agriculture come in for an assessment.*** Justin Brown stated that one thing that is holding us back is the lack of the CR and authority. Mary Greendale stated that we need to take charge. We can start forming a plan. We need to take things by topic such as CR issue (where things are), agricultural restriction, etc. ***Mary stated that we can go to the Registry of Deeds to get information on the property.*** We need to be organized. We need to take control on the CR. ***We need to get a structural engineer to look at the house. With regard to the Title V – we should contact Paul Saulnier.*** It was felt that we not concentrate on the house right now. ***We should bring in experts to go over the soil on the property.*** Our plan to the Selectmen should include that we want to be there in the spring. Mary Greendale stated that the Selectmen has to make the decision for Conservation to respond. . ***Everyone First items that we need to proceed with are get the soil tested; establish a non-profit; and contact the Secretary of State should be given a job to do. We need to get into the network of associations to go to trade shows. We need to stay focused on planning. Grants will start popping up soon. Justin Brown stated that we need to put together a list of our equipment needs. PJ Kilkelly stated that we need to form a farming plan. It was suggested that we talk to Brittany relative to a business plan. Justin stated that we need to be more specific and assign tasks. Mary Greendale suggested that perhaps we could have a managed wood harvest. We need to get in contact with the experts sooner than later on both a state and federal level.***

Brooksmount Farm: Tony Lulek reported the Pulte is going before the Planning Board again on Thursday, September 17, 2015. Nothing has changed relative to the barn. Pulte had asked if we had funds available to move the barn. It was suggested that we could possibly partner up with the Historical Commission.

Miscellaneous: Dick Morse, Conservation Associates, spoke to the group relative to having a seed saving class. We are interested but right now feel that our plate is full. It was suggested that perhaps we could do a seed saving lecture in the spring at our Spring Event.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at 7:00 PM.

Paula Mark made a motion, seconded by PJ Kilkelly, to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Horne, Clerk