

HOLLISTON AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MINUTES

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

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

Interested Parties: Bobby Blair, Cortney Black, Lisa Bobrin, Abby Dawson, Nancy Dubin, Kate Gray, PJ Kilkelly, Chris Lee, Deb Moore, John Moore, Amine Renali, Linda Scruton, Dennis Serocki, Kristen Serocki, Jocelyn Tremblay and Aislinn Weaver.

Meeting Called to Order: Chairperson, Tony Lulek called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Minutes of the Last Meeting: Paula Mark made a motion, seconded by Justin Brown, to accept the minutes of the November 17, 2015 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Commission Resignation: Chris Lee asked for an explanation of PJ Kilkelly's resignation from the Commission. Tony Lulek stated that he would like to move forward. For a better understanding of what each individual expressed, the comments are listed by individual.

PJ Kilkelly

He asked if he could make a statement. He thanked all present and the Board for having this discussion. He served two years on the Commission with the objective of improving things in the town. The reason that he resigned was because he could no longer support the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson. He has had a lot of conversations with people in the town. He stated the following reasons of why he resigned: (1) At the September 16, 2015 meeting, accusations and comments made to the members by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson; (2) A clear lack of leadership throughout the year on many items; (3) In March 2015, the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson discuss and went to Town Hall to have a member of the press removed from the AgCom meetings. This was never discussed with board members; and (4) For the 2014 Fall Town Meeting, the Chairperson failed to work with another board member to create a presentation on the Serocki property to be used at the Town Meeting. He stated that he felt that the Commission was in dire need for new leadership. We are at a crossroads relative to the Serocki property. This is our community and we should do what is right.

Deb Moore

She applauded PJ for what he has done at the Community Garden as well as the Butterfly Aviary. He made it something for everyone to be proud of. She asked how the Commission was going to be able to continue the maintenance of this area. Tony Lulek stated that that is a concern of ours which we are planning to keep a watch on.

John Moore

He spoke on the time when he was instrumental in the town buying the golf course. It was done through a grassroots movement. PJ was very instrumental in the development of the garden and the butterfly aviary and to destroy that influence is a crime. The Commission should just sit down and talk for the benefit of all.

Jocelyn Tremblay

She stated that it is unjust what has been done. PJ cannot work with the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson so we need someone that can reach out to everyone. We need somebody in touch and knows what to do. With regard to the Serocki property, the community has not been asked for their ideas. The right people need to be in charge. Things need to be done.

Cortney Black

She stated that PJ is dedicated to this community.

Kate Gray

She stated that PJ is a good friend of the Serocki property. The fact that PJ is gone from the Commission is sad for the community. She asked why PJ is not on the Board. Tony Lulek stated that PJ had resigned.

Kristen Serocki

She stated that PJ was always checking on the property. He needs to continue to be part of that project. A lot of volunteers will be needed.

Nancy Dubin

She stated that there does need to be a management plan. We need to find a way to bring it all together.

Tony Lulek

He stated that the Agricultural Commission's mission is to educate and promote agriculture. The agricultural community scene has changed. PJ is a viable and important member of the community. The Commission is a group of 8 people who are suppose to work together. With regard to the Serocki property, our goal is to set up a non-profit. This is not a project that can happen overnight. The Commission wants to get back to its original mission with regard to outreach and reestablishing with the farms. There will continue to be an Agricultural Commission no matter who is on it. We know what a passionate issue this is and we do want to stress how much peoples' perceptions matter to us but we do need to move forward. One person cannot make the Commission and we want to get back to doing our job. Tony expressed that he

was glad that so many came to our meeting who have an interest in the Commission and to PJ that there was nothing personal ever intended.

Rogers Road Property: Tony Lulek stated that this is not a project for the Agricultural Commission and that a sub-committee needs to be formed. At our last meeting we had a presentation of educational possibilities on the property. We are also moving forward on the 501(c)(3). The plowing, by Justin Brown, for the winter is all set. We will be advising the public as to when there will be a meeting of the sub-committee. This group will report back to the Agricultural Commission. Helen MacArthur has an accountant for the filing. Nancy Dubin stated that she knows someone who can help us with establishing the 501(c)(3). There would be three different groups that could be formed: Friends of Agriculture, Board of Directors and Advisory Board. As of right now the CR is still not complete and we cannot do anything on the land until the CR is in place. Dennis Serocki stated that he has an interest in being a part of this endeavor. Tony stated that we need to keep things out in the open after this meeting and going forward. We can take steps on communicating such as posting notices in the newspaper, on Facebook and word of mouth. To make this a reality we will need a lot of help. A meeting will be scheduled for the care group. Kristen Serocki stated that there has not been much communication relative to the property. Kristen and Dennis Serocki stated that there have been people who have volunteered to help to do the clean up. Tony stated that the Agricultural Commission needs to be part of this for the moment. John Moore asked why the town doesn't do the plowing at the property. Tony stated that he would address this issue with the town. Aislynn Weaver asked if the only action of the Agricultural Commission would be to report back to the town. Tony stated that once the 501(c)(3), subcommittee and Advisory Board has been set at the beginning they would communicate with the Agricultural Commission who would communicate with the town.

Spring Event: It was decided that the spring event would be a seed program. Helen MacArthur has offered her greenhouse to hold the program. We want to make this a program for all ages. Suggestions for the program were a seed library, sharing and saving seeds, seed buying, planting, greenhouse seed planting and inside and outside germinating. It would be nice to be able to tie this event in with other organizations. Justin Brown will talk to the Holliston in Bloom Committee relative to a demonstration of proper mulching. Nancy Dubin stated that her husband, David, could talk about composting. Justin Brown stated that we could bring compost bins. Tony stated that he wants this year's event to be more educational. Other possible programs that could be covered would be conservation, soil testing, rules on wetlands, and organic gardening. It was suggested that in addition to the greenhouse, we could put tents up. Another suggestion was a workshop on backyard chickens and turkeys. Kristen Serocki stated that she may know someone who could do soil testing. Tony Lulek stated that the Garden Club could do the seed planting. Other suggestions were Conservation (Chuck) ó Justin will check with him; Biodynamic ó Lisa Bobrin; chickens and turkeys ó Nancy Dubin and AJ Collins; Volcanic Mulching ó Ahronian; Pruning ó Henry Patt; Cableing and Irrigation (Rolf Briggs) ó Kristen Serocki. Another subject that was suggested was beneficial insects.

Annual Report: The Annual Report for the Agricultural Commission for fiscal year 2015 was presented. Helen MacArthur made a motion, seconded by Justin Brown, to accept the report with one change. The motion passed unanimously.

Miscellaneous: Justin Brown went to the Community Garden to look at the fence. We need to get about 4 feet of fence to fully enclose the garden. PJ Kilkelly stated that he still has not been paid for the testing of soil samples from the Rogers Road property. This bill had been forwarded to Open Space for payment. Justin Brown made a motion, seconded by Paula Mark, to pay the bill for the soil testing. The motion passed unanimously. The date of Tuesday, January 12, 2016 was chosen for our next meeting.

Paula Mark made a motion, seconded by Justin Brown, to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Horne, Clerk