

**MINUTES
AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING
HYBRID PARTICIPATION
November 10, 2021**

OPENING: 7:03 p.m. Chairman Hansen opened the hybrid meeting is being held via Zoom and in person at the Land Use Meeting Room in Town Hall by announcing a roll call attendance, that the meeting is being recorded, and noted the regulations associated with a remote meeting.

There were 9 members of the public in attendance via Zoom and in person.

ATTENDANCE

Burt Hansen, Chairman	Present
Dan Cook, Commissioner	Present
Zach Barnett, Commissioner	Present
Ron Cecchini, Commissioner	Present
Brett Colson, Commissioner	Present
Lenita Bober, Commissioner	Absent
Tammy Ciak-Bissaillon, Commissioner	Absent
Bob Mucha	Absent

MINUTES

Chairman Hansen made a motion to accept the minutes of October 13, 2021. Vice Chairman Colson seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chairman Hansen	yes	Vice Chairman Colson	yes
Commissioner Cook	yes	Commissioner Barnett	yes
Commissioner Cecchini	yes		

There was no quorum for the meeting on October 27, 2021. Minutes were submitted as informational only.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Hansen made note that Mr. Sage Fury, 91 Granville Road, hand delivered his letter of interest to become a member of the Agricultural Commission to the Select Board office. Mr. Fury also set up a Microsoft Share, however, no more than 3 members can message at the same time or it would count as a quorum.

DISCUSSION

Select Board Chairman Hansen made note that the Select Board members were invited to the meeting to talk about recent events relative to the appointment/non-reappointing of Committee members. Chairman Hansen received a call from Selectman Fox who related that the Select Board members were only communicating in public meetings. Agricultural Commission issues, specifically only currently having 6 members, will be discussed at the Select Board meeting on November 15th.

APR Ms. Smith contacted Chairman Hansen and asked if the Agricultural Commission wanted to be alerted about grants. A flow chart on how the APR process works can also be created. Ms. Hobson also discussed the preservation of under 5-acre parcels with Ms. Cook-Obregon, but no further information has been received as of this meeting.

Master Plan Chairman Hansen and Ms. Cook-Obregon met with the members of the Master Plan Committee. There was a quorum of Planning Board members who voted in the members of the Committee. A Housing Plan was included each of which will have startup funds of \$25,000.00. As it will be a multiyear plan, funding will become available in an as needed basis. There was a Master Plan that was completed in 1997, but was never adopted. The Master Plan is a concept of where Southwick can/will be in the future. Information from the residents will be obtained through previous and future surveys. The Committee will meet monthly.

Agricultural Committee Facebook Page Chairman Hansen related information that was posted on the page. Mr. Steinhart and Ms. Hill, Town Clerk, made note that the page is part of the municipality and is required to follow the guidelines. A news article was posted, but an editorial comment was included which was not appropriate in accordance with the guidelines. The page was disabled. Mr. Middleton, IT, Chairman Hansen and Commissioner Barnett will now be the administrators of the page to approve posts before they become public.

Right to Farm Chairman Hansen stated that this was still on his to do list.

Community Garden Chairman Hansen neglected to inform the gardeners of the tilling, thus it was postponed until the gardeners had finished with their plots for the season. One of the participants that reserved 3 lots for the season will not be returning in 2022. The 3 lots normally reserved can be used for the children's garden.

32 Hillside Road As of this meeting, the property owner does not intend to develop the land.

Farm Brochure Ms. Cook-Obregon presented a draft of the brochure including a listing of the farms in Southwick and the products they produce or have for retail sales. One portion has a map showing the locations of the farms, hiking trails and the history of Southwick farming. Ms. Cook-Obregon suggested that the farms approve the pictures on the brochure before they are finalized for a verbal disclaimer. The former brochure did contain farms in Granville.

Lombella Property – Tannery Road There is a for sale sign on the property.

Kellogg Property Mr. Kellogg passed away recently. No definitive plans have been made for the property as of this meeting. Mr. Kellogg did however preserve several acres of land for a bird sanctuary.

Nicholson Hill Road

Winding River Land Trust Ms. Cook-Obregon has an appoint with Mr. Noonan. The name will remain as Winding River Land Trust even though the program is basically discontinued. Winding

River can include Westfield and the surrounding hill towns as opposed to changing the name to Southwick Land Trust even though there are many unique features to the land in Southwick. Land trusts also help APR applicants and work in conjunction with Conservation Commissions. Land trusts work outside of government and have more flexibility in operations. Chairman Hansen noted that Southwick is considering sharing their Conservation Commission Coordinator with Blandford which may not be a good idea as Southwick has so many unique characteristics.

Commissioner Cook commented that the last of his family farm in upstate New York was sold. There are several farmers no longer able to continue farming and make a profit. The farm was originally established in 1916. Part of the issue is that the farm was receiving the same price for milk as they got in 1988.

Ms. Cook-Obregon mentioned a climate group associated with the library that are interested in meeting with the Agricultural Committee in the near future to discuss how climate changes affect farms. Ms. Cook-Obregon will forward the information to Chairman Hansen.

Vice Chairman Colson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 PM. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chairman Hansen	yes	Vice Chairman Colson	yes
Commissioner Cook	yes	Commissioner Barnett	yes
Commissioner Cecchini	yes		

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Nilsson
cc:

Select Board
Town Clerk

Burt Hansen, Chairman

Brett Colson, Vice Chairman

Dan Cook, Commissioner

Ron Cecchini, Commissioner

Zach Barnett, Commissioner

Tammy Ciak-Bissaillon, Commissioner

Bob Mucha, Commissioner

Lenita Bober, Commissioner

Date