

**MINUTES
AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING**

January 12, 2022

OPENING: 7:00 p.m. Chairman Hansen opened the hybrid meeting by announcing a roll call attendance, that the meeting is being recorded, and noted the regulations associated with a remote meeting.

ATTENDANCE

Burt Hansen, Chairman	Present
Dan Cook, Commissioner	Present
Zach Barnett, Commissioner	Absent
Ron Cecchini, Commissioner	Present
Brett Colson, Commissioner	Absent
Lenita Bober, Commissioner	Present
Tammy Ciak-Bissaillon, Commissioner	Present
Dennis Clark	Present
Maryssa Cook-Obregon	Present

MAIL

- 1) The first payment was received for a plot at the Community Garden
- 2) The budget report had no expenditures
- 3) The reappointment forms from the Select Board office

MINUTES

Chairman Hansen made a motion to accept the minutes of December 8, 2021. Chairman Hansen made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Ciak-Bissaillon seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Chairman Hansen	yes	Commissioner Cook	yes
Commissioner Ciak-Bissaillon	yes	Commissioner Cecchini	yes
Commissioner Bober	yes	Commissioner Clark	yes
Commissioner Cook-Obregon	yes		

Guest

Mr. Wayne Magni, Project Manager, requested to address the Committee concerning a bridge that needs to be constructed. The property location is across from 327 North Loomis Street and is in Chapter 61. The property is currently being logged and the original existing access bridge is not usable. The new bridge will be 2 concrete abutments and a forestry bridge capable of holding up to 100,000 lbs. and will be about 30 feet in length. Mr. Magni assured the Committee that the new bridge will gain access to the property strictly for agricultural or forestry purposes only. Mr. Magni was looking for a letter of endorsement to the Conservation

Commission stating that the bridge would be exempt from the Wetlands Protection Act. The concrete abutments will be poured and that cannot take place until about March. The general purpose to gain access will be to maintain the Chapter 61 requirements and forestry. There is a small field that has been overgrown with invasive species that in the future may be used for agriculture. Chairman Hansen and Commissioner Cook-Obregon will schedule a site visit for a report at the next meeting. Commissioner Cecchini suggested the property owner contact USDA for a possible grant for the removal of invasive species.

DISCUSSION

Master Plan Chairman Hansen gave copies of the Open Space plan to the members. The same material can be included in the Master Plan. There are plans for a survey, but as of yet, specifics were not determined but could include a mailing, internet and/or public locations for an in-person survey. Commissioner Cook-Obregon suggested that assignments be distributed so there can be progress on a specific direction. Chairman Hansen noted that funding collected from Save Southwick was distributed at \$6,500.00 to the Master Plan and \$1,500 to the Open Pantry. Part of the Master Plan is to preserve open space and farm land. Chairman Hansen made note that the Agricultural Committee should take all steps available to being proactive in land preservation and communicate with all Town Boards and Department so they are aware of the function of the Agricultural Committee and direct any potential land preservation to a member.

Farm Brochure Chairman Hansen noted that he had documents printed at Southwoods at a reasonable cost. The Agricultural Committee budget should have sufficient funds for printing the farm brochure. Commissioner Cook-Obregon asked if the QR code connected to all open space, not just the trails. It will be tested before the brochure is printed. There are also some typos and edits that need to be finalized.

Brzoska APR Land Commissioner Clark noted that the dispute of land between Brzoska and Whalley was resolved. The land was designated as being part of the Brzoska APR land. The Assessor's map will be updated.

Right to Farm Chairman Hansen is still in the process of working on this. Commissioner Cook-Obregon requested a copy so as to start working on the document revisions.

FY 23 Budgets The FY 23 budgets are due prior to the next scheduled meeting. Chairman Hansen will work with the Finance liaison for direction on how to proceed with submitting the budget.

Mission Statement The mission statement for the Agricultural Committee is in process. When the Committee was formed, the members were supposed to include "at least 4" members that were involved in agricultural. The "agricultural" word was not specifically defined. Chairman Hansen suggested that a Warrant Article be submitted for the next Annual Town Meeting to redefine the Town Article to closer resemble the State definition.

217 Sheep Pasture Road The property owners are still waiting for the appraisal on the property.

Less than 5 Acres There may be a potential change through the legislation that may include land less than 5 acres in a preservation program. Commissioner Cook-Obregon and Ciak-Bissaillon will contact neighboring Agricultural Committees to determine if they would be interested in a joint petition or letter to the legislature. Commissioner Ciak-Bissaillon will also include that information on Facebook.

Social Media The Committee members are still unsure as to what needs to be done to post information on the Town website. Chairman Hansen will contact Mr. Middleton to clarify the approval process. Commissioner Clark made a motion to have Mr. Sage Fury, 91 Granville Road, appointed as a liaison to process social media posts on the Town Web. Mr. Fury has extensive knowledge on how to process social media. Commissioner Bober seconded the motion. The Select Board will be notified that the Agricultural Commission is taking on a volunteer. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chairman Hansen	yes	Commissioner Cook	yes
Commissioner Ciak-Bissaillon	yes	Commissioner Cecchini	yes
Commissioner Bober	yes	Commissioner Clark	yes
Commissioner Cook-Obregon	yes		

Public Comments Lucy Benoit 268 South Longyard Road and Diane Gale, 5 Point Grove Road commented on appointments to the Agricultural Committee. Ms. Benoit related that the Select Board “may be” waiting for advisory from the State. Ms. Gale noted that there are still open meeting law complaints that have not been resolved.

Commissioner Clark made a motion to adjourn at 8:11. Chairman Hansen seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chairman Hansen	yes	Commissioner Cook	yes
Commissioner Ciak-Bissaillon	yes	Commissioner Cecchini	yes
Commissioner Bober	yes	Commissioner Clark	yes
Commissioner Cook-Obregon	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

Dennis Clark, Commissioner

Lenita Bober, Commissioner

Maryssa Cook-Obregon, Commissioner

Date