

**MINUTES
AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING
February 9, 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
Ron Cecchini, Commissioner	Present
Lenita Bober, Commissioner	Present
Tammy Ciak-Bissaillon, Commissioner	Present
Dennis Clark, Commissioner	Present
Maryssa Cook-Obregon, Commissioner	Present
Zach Barnett, Alternate	Present
Brett Colson, Alternate	Absent

ATTENDANCE

Mr. Wayne Magnie Chairman Hansen recognized Mr. Magnie, in attendance requesting that the Agricultural Commission find the bridge construction on 326 North Loomis Street agricultural exempt. The bridge is for access to the property for the purpose of logging and had been used for farming purposes, but not for building purposes. There are also plans to remove some of the invasive species growing on the property in the future. Chairman Hansen did do a site visit and reviewed the potential plans for the bridge with construction starting in July. The bridge is a replacement. A letter will be issued to the Conservation Commission stating that the project should have an agricultural exemption from wetlands rules. Chairman Hansen made a motion to have a letter issued to the Conservation Commission stating that the project would be exempt from the Wetlands Protection Act under Agricultural Exemption. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

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

MINUTES

Commissioner Cook-Obregon made a motion to accept the minutes of January 12, 2022. Commissioner Ciak-Bissaillon seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

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

Commissioner Clark yes
Commissioner Bober yes
Commissioner Cook yes

DISCUSSION

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Chairman Hansen noted the receipt of a letter from the Massachusetts Farm Bureau stating that the Southwick Agricultural Committee members can join the bureau at no cost. Membership would include resources related to agriculture. Chairman Hansen made a motion to apply for the membership. Commissioner Bober seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

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

Commissioner Clark yes
Commissioner Bober yes
Commissioner Cook yes

Planning Board Work Session Chairman Hansen noted that there was to be a work session by the Planning Board concerning a potential bylaw for a moratorium on building on February 10, 2022 at 7:00 pm. Ms. Diane Gale 5 Point Grove Road stated that it was not a moratorium

Spud-pocalypse Chairman Hansen read a tongue-in-cheek article in the Boston Globe concerning the potential lack of potatoes causing a potential shortage of french-fries and hash browns.

Master Plan Chairman Hansen was not able to attend the Feb. 3 meeting, but Commissioner Cook-Obregon reported that the committee discussed a contract with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. The contract will be segmented with a focus on Open Space. Once a payment is agreed upon and the contract is signed, the Town can move forward on the Master Plan. There will also be two high school students participating in the plan focusing on trending in the future. There were also samples of a survey that can be applied to Southwick residents. Mr. Sage Fury 91 Granville Road also made note on the survey and the provisions that can be included and suggested that the survey be available at public events.

Farm Brochure Commissioner Cook-Obregon edited the brochure with all the updates and corrections. The only remaining insert is the map of trails. The existing QR code leads only to the Open Space trails. The brochure should include all trails in Southwick.

Right to Farm Letter Chairman Hansen is still in the process of creating and refining the document. Commissioner Cook-Obregon will work on the existing draft.

APR Chairman Hansen has a document that is step-by-step instructions on how to go through the application process; he thanked Lucy Benoit, 268 S. Longyard Rd. for locating the information. Commissioner Clark suggested that a link be created on the Ag Com webpage for the document. Commissioner Cook-Obregon was contacted by Ms. Tina Smith about a workshop relative to taxation of APR lands. Commissioner Cook-Obregon made a motion for the Ag Com to co-sponsor a meeting. Chairman Hansen seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Chairman Hansen yes

Commissioner Clark yes

Commissioner Ciak-Bissaillon yes

Commissioner Bober yes

Commissioner Cook-Obregon yes

Commissioner Cook yes

Commissioner Cecchini yes

Mass Association of Ag Coms Commissioner Ciak-Bissaillon reached out to the association and received a reply with contact information and will forward more information in the future.

Climate Change Commissioner Ciak-Bissaillon received contacts for individuals that may be of assistance providing climate change information. Commissioner Ciak-Bissaillon also shared information on the Ag Com Facebook page for a “farm talk” presented by the US Dept. of Agriculture.

Open Meeting Law Members of the Ag Com attended the session for the Open Meeting Law on January 26th. Some topics focused on deliberation, sub-committees, emailing, sharing information between members, etc. Chairman Hansen also noted that the Executive Order for hybrid meetings will expire on April 1st, but the legislature is working on extending it to July 15th, and may make it permanent.

302 Granville Road Commissioner Clark stated that there was no RDA filing for the property at this time. The property owner is considering planting grapes for a vineyard in the future. The Forest Cutting Plan has been approved by the State.

72 Mort Vining Road Chairman Hansen stated that the Ag Com and the Conservation Commission received a notice of Right of First Refusal from the Select Board office. A valid Purchase and Sale agreement was not included in the documentation as part of the Chapter 61A process.

Prifti Commissioner Cook-Obregon stated that the property owners are speaking with MDAR to gain more information.

Davis Property Commissioner Clark stated that the appraisal had been received and is being reviewed.

Chairman Hansen made a motion to adjourn at 8:10. Commissioner Bober seconded the motion.
The roll call vote was as follows:

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

Commissioner Clark yes
Commissioner Bober yes
Commissioner Cook yes

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Nilsson
cc:

Select Board
Town Clerk

Burt Hansen, Chairman

Brett Colson, Alternate, Vice Chairman

Dan Cook, Commissioner

Ron Cecchini, Commissioner

Zach Barnett, Alternate

Tammy Ciak-Bissaillon, Commissioner

Dennis Clark, Commissioner

Lenita Bober, Commissioner

Maryssa Cook-Obregon, Commissioner

Date