

MINUTES
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING
November 9, 2022

OPENING: 7:00 p.m. Chairman Hansen opened the hybrid meeting by announcing the time, date and members in attendance.

ATTENDANCE

Burt Hansen, Chairman	Present
Dan Cook, Commissioner	Present
Zach Barnett, Alternate	Absent
Ron Cecchini, Commissioner	Absent
Brett Colson, Vice Chairman/Alternate	Absent
Lenita Bober, Commissioner	Absent
Tammy Ciak-Bissaillon, Commissioner	Present (Zoom)
Maryssa Cook-Obregon, Commissioner	Absent
Sage Fury, Alternate	Present

MINUTES

Alternate Fury made a motion to approve the minutes of October 12, 2022 with corrections. Commissioner Ciak-Bissaillon seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Burt Hansen	yes	Dan Cook	yes
Tammy Ciak-Bissaillon	yes	Sage Fury	yes

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were three members in attendance that individually expressed interest in being part of or becoming an actual member of the Agricultural Commission.

Jessica Parker, 62 Sheep Pasture Road, has a tobacco farm that has been in existence for 6 years and is also president of an equine club, active in 4H and is a member of the Master Plan Advisory Committee.

Angelina Simone, 10 Cedar Street, grew up on a dairy farm in Feeding Hills and is passionate about land preservation. Ms. Simone is a teacher and wants to educate students on agricultural issues.

Lucas Caron, 148 Hillside Road, is a student at Southwick Regional High School and is the “next generation” of residents that have an interest in agricultural programs. Currently there are no classes at the school for any agricultural related subjects.

The Agricultural Commissioners and Alternate also gave an individual explanation as to why they are part of the commission. But, as Chairman Hansen noted, the commission is composed of 7 members and up to 5 alternates. As of this meeting, there is one opening for a full time member and attendance has been limited with barely a quorum at each meeting. The Agricultural Commission welcomes anyone that is interested in applying to be a part of the commission.

NEW BUSINESS

Ag Com Web Page Alternate Fury stated that it has not been updated as of this meeting.

Farm Parade October 22nd Chairman Hansen stated that it was a great success and there were several entries from local farms.

Farm Forum Chairman Hansen related information relative to a forum to be held at the library on December 14th. The forum is to invite farmers to exchange information and discuss scheduling an open farm day similar to that of Granby CT. The forum will also be open to addressing any issues farmers have relative to the Town. Chairman Hansen will check with Michelle Hill, Town Clerk to determine if this type of meeting will need to be posted.

OLD BUSINESS

Master Plan Chairman Hansen noted that the committee has now been in existence for 1 year. There were over 900 responses to the survey. The next step is to focus on specific topics and possibly creating an implementation committee. In 1997, the Planning Board rejected the Master Plan and it had not moved forward until 2021.

Sofinowski Land Preserve Chairman Hansen met with the Conservation Commission who granted a blanket permit to continue with the cleanup. As the preserve is being actively farmed, it is not as restrictive as other conservation lands. The Fire Department also granted an open burning permit for piles of brush which cannot be larger than a Volkswagen beetle. Brush and evasive species will be removed to make it possible to mow a larger area specifically in the location of both ponds. The next scheduled clean up date is November 13th.

Meeting Format Chairman Hansen received a brochure from the Hamden Country Improvement League who support 4H and participate in grant funding. Chairman Hansen will contact the league to determine if there would be any interest in having a guest speaker at a Agricultural Committee meeting.

Community Garden Signs Commissioner Cook-Obregon is working on this project and was not able to attend the meeting for an update. The garden, which was not very successful in 2022 due to the lack of rain, is closed for the season. Commissioner Cook stated that the garden will be tilled in the spring and that the well is functioning. There has already been a payment for two lots for the 2023 growing season.

Open Space Plan Chairman Hansen noted three main activities to support which include preservation of working farms and forests, the Right to Farm real estate disclosure and the potential for an Open farm Day in 2023.

Youth Members Chairman Hansen stated that there was no curriculum in the Southwick school system relative to agriculture. In order to preserve interest in retaining Southwick as a farming community, the youth of the Town would need to get involved with agriculture.

Ag Com Magazine Alternate Fury is working on the website and may eventually be able to have a printed copy of the magazine.

Special Town Meeting Chairman Hansen announced that there is going to be a Special Town Meeting that will address the possibility of building an infrastructure to allow alternate cable choices.

As there was no other business to discuss, Chairman Hansen made a motion to close the meeting at 7:49. Alternate Fury seconded the motion. The vote was as follows:

Burt Hansen	yes	Dan Cook	yes
Tammy Ciak-Bissaillon	yes	Sage Fury	yes

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Nilsson

cc:

Select Board
Town Clerk

Burt Hansen, Chairman

Brett Colson, Alternate

Dan Cook, Commissioner

Ron Cecchini, Commissioner

Zach Barnett, Alternate

Tammy Ciak-Bissaillon, Commissioner

Lenita Bober, Commissioner

Maryssa Cook-Obregon, Commissioner

Sage Fury, Alternate

Date