

**MINUTES  
AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE  
REMOTE PARTICIPATION  
March 10, 2021**

**OPENING:** The remote Zoom meeting is being held in pursuant to the Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A, 18 and the Governor's March 15, 2020 order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place.

**ATTENDANCE**

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

Also in attendance at this meeting was:  
Joe Deedy, 258 Feeding Hills Road  
Eric Mueller, LMC

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7:00 pm: Vice Chairman Maryssa Cook-Obregon opened the meeting announced all members in attendance, that the meeting was being recorded, and noted the regulations associated with a remote meeting.

**MINUTES**

Vice Chairman Cook-Obregon made a motion to approve the minutes of 2/10/21. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows

Hansen Burt, Chairman - yes	Maryssa Cook-Obregon – yes
Dennis Clark – yes	Brett Colson – yes

**GUEST SPEAKER**

Mr. Muller from the Lake Management Committee was invited to the meeting to discuss irrigation from Lake Congamond to farmers. The past few seasons were exceptionally dry and some of the farmers in Southwick used water from the lake for irrigation. However, the lake was treated and the farmers were not notified of the treatment or what was used. Mr. Mueller gave a

history of the lakes stating that lakes in Western Massachusetts have a short life span. Congamond lake is approximately 14,000 years old and contains 3 billion gallons of water. Throughout the years, there has been a build up of decaying leaves at the bottom of that lake that may be as much as 9 feet deep. Samples are sent to a lab to determine the water quality, clarity and algae blooms. Several of the locations for the blooms have been eradicated, but do come back spread quickly and need to be treated quickly. The best time to treat the algae is in the beginning of the season around early May. Mr. Mueller further explained that the lakes are 465 acres and have been treated by Alumn at the cost of \$800,000.00 and should be effective for a period of 20 years. The Lake Management Committee won a grant from the State to purchase equipment that actually sucks the muck out of the bottom of the lake, but funding is now no longer available. Vice Chairman Cook-Obregon did ask if the farmers that use the lake water can be alerted with advance notice prior to the treatments so they can plan irrigation accordingly. Mr. Muller stated that posters are made available to the public including a time line for treatments, but cautioned the Committee that there are regulations on how much water can be removed from the lake on a daily basis by the farmers. Irrigation from the lake by the farmers is only used during times of drought and not a common practice. Mr. Muller stated that the Lake Management Committee will have better communication with the Agricultural Committee in the future relative to the lake treatments. The Agricultural Committee members thanked Mr. Muller for his extensive information and expressed their appreciation for future communication.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Annual Report** Chairman Hansen completed the 2020 Annual Report which was submitted to the Select Board office.

**258 Feeding Hills Road** Mr. Joe Deedy attended the Zoom meeting and explained his plans for a site improvement. There are several pine trees close to the Tennessee Gas Line property which are past their life. The stumps will remain. Mr. Deedy is proposing to remove those trees and replace the bridge that is used for cart and tractor crossing. Commissioner Clark explained that Mr. Deedy does not need permission or filing as his property is exempt from the Wetland Protection Act, but did make a motion to endorse the plan. Maryssa Cook-Obregon, Vice Chairman, seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Hansen Burt, Chairman - yes  
Dennis Clark – yes

Maryssa Cook-Obregon – yes  
Brett Colson – yes

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Right to Farm Signs** Vice Chairman Cook-Obregon stated that she received permission from the DOT to post 2 of the 3 signs. The final approval is needed for the sign on the east side of RT 57. Mr. Brown, DPW Director, will install the signs.

**Census** Chairman Hansen stated that there has been no further progress on the census.

**Finance Committee Hearings** The budget hearing for the Agricultural Committee is scheduled via Zoom on April 20<sup>th</sup> at 8:35. All Agricultural Committee members are encouraged to attend.

**58 & 64 Tannery Road** There is no further information from the property owners as of this meeting.

**Farm Brochure** Vice Chairman Cook-Obregon stated that though she does have high pictures resolution for the brochure, she would like to wait until the spring to take more of a variety of pictures. The pictures would be more colorful with potential participation of the Southwick farmers.

**Prifti Property** Vice Chairman Cook-Obregon did contact the Prifti property owners who stated that they are in contact with officials of the land preservation and no longer require assistance from the Agricultural Committee.

**Tracto Rally** Commissioner Clark proposed a discussion on the possibility of conducting a Tractor Really this year and will contact Ms. Bober for determining an interest in a rally. Outdoor events such as this are usually conducted at the end of April.

**Kellogg Property** Commissioner Clark related that there are several options for the property. The cost of the parcel is low, but there will be a substantial cost to build a bridge to access the rear of the property were a residential building can be constructed.

**Community Garden** Chairman Hansen stated that fencing and a gate have been purchased for the garden. A budget line item was submitted for the cost of a new well, but ledge may prevent digging a well deep enough to supply water to the garden. There has already been one applicant for a garden plot.

As there was no further business to discuss, Commissioner Clark made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Vice Chairman Cook-Obregon seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows:

Hansen Burt, Chairman - yes  
Dennis Clark – yes

Maryssa Cook-Obregon – yes  
Brett Colson – yes

**The next meeting of the Agricultural Commission is scheduled for April 14, 2021**

Respectfully submitted,

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Jean Nilsson  
cc:

Select Board  
Town Clerk

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Bert Hansen, Chairman

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Maryssa Cook-Obregon, Vice Chairman

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Dennis Clark, Commissioner

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Dan Cook, Commissioner

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Zach Barnett, Commissioner

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Tammy Clark-Bissaillon, Commissioner

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Ron Cecchini, Commissioner

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Brett Colson, Commissioner

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Lenita Bober, Commissioner

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Diana Flynn, Alternate Commissioner

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Date