

TOWN OF EAST KINGSTON
Agricultural Commission Steering Committee

2010-2011
Chris Castonguay, Chairman
Ronald Morales, Vice Chairman

MINUTES
March 10, 2011 Meeting
7:13 pm

NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON APRIL 14

AGENDA:

- ◆ **Attendance**
- ◆ **Approval of February minutes**
- ◆ **Board Business**
- ◆ **Adjourn**

The regular meeting of the Agricultural Steering Committee was called to order at 7:12 pm.

ATTENDANCE: Mrs. White called the roll.

MEMBERS: Mr. C. Castonguay, Mr. R. Morales, Mr. Brad Rice, Steve White and Recording Secretary Barbara White. Also in attendance was East Kingston resident Peter Gilligan and Marisa Novello, Reporter from the Exeter Newsletter.

BOARD BUSINESS

Election Day

The Board congratulated themselves on acquiring a positive outcome at the Town Election. East Kingston now will have an Agricultural Commission. The members were enthusiastic about what they might accomplish.

Discussion noted surprise at the number of negative votes the proposed Agricultural Commission received, but it was ascertained that perhaps some residents voted no to everything thinking their taxes would not go up that way. The Steering Committee thought they had done a good job of publicizing their efforts and thought everyone had gotten the message of what they were all about and what they would be trying to accomplish in the future. Their main focus was to help allow the farms in East Kingston to continue and promote anything that would help in that effort.

It was acknowledged that Monahan's was of the opinion if a Farmer's Market was established, it would hurt their business. The committee did not think that was true; they thought it could give Monahan's another venue.

One of their objectives would be to educate people about the benefits of keeping farming in the Town, find ways to encourage local businesses to utilize the produce from the local farms, and perhaps implement some projects for the elementary school children to get them interested in farming. They could also act as a link between residents with farmland they wanted to lease and farmers looking to lease that land.

Actual work on any sort of farmer's market or community garden would be at a much later date.

Membership

The first order of business was to determine the membership terms and ascertain who was interested in holding those positions so a letter of recommendation could be sent to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

Terms would be staggered at first, 1 - 2 and 3 years, and subsequent terms would be for 3 years. This would always allow that seasoned members would be in place along with new members to help them until they were up to speed.

The following persons/terms were deliberated upon for recommendation to the Selectmen:

| FULL MEMBER | | ALTERNATE MEMBER | |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 year | Ronald Morales | 1 year | Linda White |
| 2 year | Brad Rice | 2 year | |
| 3 year | Steve White | 3 year | Chris Castonguay |

Mrs. White will submit a letter of recommendation to the Selectmen for their next meeting.

When the members are approved by the Selectmen, the Commission will elect their officers.

Approval of Minutes: There were no revisions to the February minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Castonguay **MOVED** to approve the minutes of February 10 as presented. Mr. Morales seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Future Meeting Dates

Following is a list of the meeting dates for the rest of 2011. Each date is on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

| | |
|-----------|-------------|
| APRIL 14 | SEPTEMBER 8 |
| MAY 12 | OCTOBER 13 |
| JUNE 9 | NOVEMBER 10 |
| JULY 14 | DECEMBER 8 |
| AUGUST 11 | |

Rules of Procedure

Mrs. White commented that since they were now a Commission, they might want to have some rules of procedure in place. She will use appropriate portions of the Planning Board Rules of Procedure as a shell and put together a document for the Commission to review in April.

Budget

Mrs. White reported that the Planning Board had given a blanket approval for the Agricultural Commission to have a budget of up to \$500 to spend before they would need to come back before the Planning Board for any additional funds.

Notices

Mrs. White noted that meeting notices should be posted as for the Planning Board and Zoning Board, and suggested using the same light green paper as the inserts, as that would allow their notices to stand out from the Planning Board, Zoning Board and Selectmen's meetings. The Commission members agreed. Mrs. White will purchase the green paper.

Kick-Off Meeting

The Commission discussed a kick-off meeting perhaps in the June-July timeframe, and utilizing a questionnaire asking the residents what they would like from them; what types of things do they think they would like to see accomplished. Steve White will put something together for the commission to review at the April meeting. Mrs. White will see what dates the Town Hall would be available to them at that timeframe.

Mr. Morales indicated he could ask if State Agricultural Commissioner Lorraine Merrill would be available to give a short talk at this kick-off meeting.

Acreages in Town

The Commission noted it would be beneficial to have a list of all the names and addresses of people in Town and how many acres they owned. They could find out if anyone with land was willing to lease to farmers, and it did not need to be a large amount of acreage. A 5-acre lot would work as well as a large farm, as not everyone was looking for hundreds of acres.

Mrs. White will check with the Selectmen's Office to see if they can provide her with that list.

Next Meeting - The next meeting is scheduled for April 14 at the Pound School.

ADJOURN

MOTION: Mr. Castonguay **MOVED** to Adjourn. Mr. Morales seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara White

Recording Secretary

Approved: _____

Chris Castonguay