

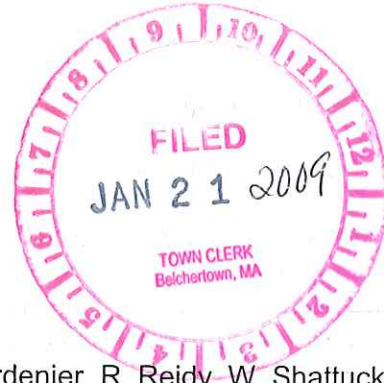
**Agricultural Commission  
October 21, 2008**

Meeting in room 104, 2 Jabish St., Lawrence Memorial Hall

Member present: G. Adzima  
Associate Members: S. Gay, A. Page

Absent Members: J. Clements, D. Beaudette, J. Gillan, H. Guardenier, R. Reidy, W. Shattuck

Visitor: Alfred Roccanti, Board of Selectmen - Liaison to AgComm



-----  
**Minutes** of August 2008 will be filed with the Town Clerk. September 2008 minutes were briefly reviewed and will be accepted at a future meeting.

\*\*\*\*\*

Grace called Kevin Hannon, Computer Director. He noted an ongoing upgrade for each department to have access to the website for the Town of Belchertown.

\*\*\*\*\*

Discussed how to get in touch with farmers coming to town to let them know the AgComm is there to help and encourage farming. Grace noted that the Belchertown website can help educate farmers interested in coming to town to farm.

\*\*\*\*\*

Al Roccanti noted that the Board of Selectmen did not see a request for a recommendation to D.C. R. for a grant by Judy Gillan, as noted on the September 2008 minutes. The grant is to help the State of Massachusetts identify parcels of agricultural land (as a list) that should try to be saved for agriculture. Al Roccanti gave his e-mail address to the members: [bandaidal@charter.net](mailto:bandaidal@charter.net).

\*\*\*\*\*

Grace and Hope went to the C.I.S.A. (community in support of local agriculture) gathering at Randall's in Ludlow. They met the owner of the Roadhouse Restaurant on Federal Street at this gathering.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Model Right to Farm (RTF) Bylaw**

Grace handed A. Roccanti an older copy of the RTF bylaw, and noted that several towns have adopted a right to farm bylaw. Grace went over different points in the bylaw, which brought up questions. All the AgComm members will get a copy for review to discuss at a future meeting.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Farm Brochure**

Printed at New England Small Farms Institute (NESFI). Grace Adzima noted there are more farms in town than shown on the map. Some farms choose not to be on the map.

\*\*\*\*\*

Chapter 61 requests for release paperwork goes to the Belchertown Planning Board and Conservation Commission for a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen, who make the decision of whether the Town wishes to pursue purchase or not.

According to the Mass Farm Bureau Director, Nathan L'Etoil, at a seminar in 2007, changes to the Chapter 61 land use were upgraded to encourage farming, and when a chapter release request comes before boards and commissions, the Board of Selectmen have a right to ask a buyer what their land use plan is. Knowing the buyer's plan gives the Board of Selectmen information they need to determine if it would be in the best interest of the Town to pursue purchase.

\*\*\*\*\*

Grace noted the annual January farmer meeting will be coming up and asked for suggestions on having a speaker present, and where the meeting could be held. Suggestions for the Police Station community room, and the Senior Center dining area are both fine locations. Grace will check with all AgComm members.

Page 2. AgComm meeting October 2008

Grace asked about budget money left for the AgComm. She brought up "horse" signage for town and if she could ask the DPW to put some signs in place on town ways with some of the budget left over? The horse industry website shows various businesses that have come into place in town from horse ownership, including dentistry and chiropractors for horses. The local horse group want to educate people on slowing and driving carefully around a horse rider. They sent letters to various local driving schools, asking if they'd pass along that information to new drivers.

The local newspaper The Sentinel, would be a good way to educate people on horse riders and farming in the town.

November 18, 2008 is the next AgComm meeting date.

Adjourned at 8:45 pm.

minutes submitted by S. Gay