

Agricultural Commission
December 19, 2006



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

Members: G. Adzima, J. Gillan, W. Shattuck, J. Clement; Associate: S. Gay

Absent members: H. Guardenier, R. Reidy

Guests: D. Beaudette, Claire Bronner, Mark Bronner

The meeting was called to order @ 7:10 pm.

Minutes: Motion J. Clements to accept the August 15, 2006 minutes, Second W. Shattuck, Vote 4-0

The November, 2006 minutes will be endorsed at a future meeting.

Daniel Beaudette, Planning Board member, attended upon request by the AgComm.

The commission have questions about the Zoning Bylaw Schedule of Use section, and the zoning map. who is requesting an agriculture exemption from the Zoning Bylaw for earth removal.

The Planning Board would ask for the AgComm s opinion stating whether or not they felt the parcel is being used for an agricultural project.

The commission asked Dan's opinion about the Land Use Subcommittee and if he felt they would be changing agricultural areas on the zoning map. Dan explained the Subcommittee is changing the map in small bites.

There may be some spots the commission may want to review, for future protection.

The AgComm asked Dan if he would review the Schedule of Use area for them and share his ideas, and note whether any change to the Schedule of Use section would be beneficial to change for farming.

Dan noted that the Belchertown Land Trust (BLT) has spent time and money rehabbing old railroad sections of town for recreation. They purchased a part of the old B & M rail bed and also some land along the Swift River.

Discussed how farming has changed over the years. An example given was someone producing goods in a greenhouse, perhaps with five acres, producing their yearly income growing special greens. February 20th meeting. Dan will be in touch with the AgComm before February.

Discussed Chapter 61 and what is the strategy in town to protect different types of areas.

A local farmer was here representing his parents. He had questions concerning his parents land on Hamilton Street and Chapter 61A. He will go and talk with the Assessor's Office, to see if he might change from one chapter to another, to help his parents keep more of the 27 acres as open space. The AgComm wondered if they may take a proactive stance, perhaps by writing the Assessor s.

Discussed IRS Form F, which denotes farming income on tax forms for Federal and State income tax.

The AgComm will be holding a get together for people interested in agriculture, on January 20, 2007 at 4 pm, in the Town Hall (2 Jabish St.) auditorium.

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It was noted that the AgComm has a copy of a letter Alan Page wrote to the Board of Health regarding outdoor furnaces. It notes he feels outdoor wood stoves should not be outlawed. He states the stoves can be improved. Discussed wood pellet stoves, and also noted that State Regulations are coming in the near future, regarding stoves that burn various products.

Discussed APR's (agriculture protection restrictions), and how they work. Dan works with, and is familiar with the program and noted there are some features which need improvement.

Grace Adzima, Co-Chair, AgComm has some post cards for the January 20th get together. She will send these cards out to them, and she hopes to have fifty people show up to the gathering.

The next AgComm meeting is scheduled for January 16, 2007 at 7 pm in room 104.

Motion J. Clements to adjourn @ 8:45 pm, Second G. Adzima, Vote 4-0.

Accepted as amended
Endorsed by a majority of Agricultural Commission members on: 4/17/07

Minutes of December 19, 2006 by S. Gay, Associate Member.