

Agricultural Commission  
April 20, 2010



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

Member present: Grace Adzima, Judy Gillan

Associate Members: Daniel Beaudette, Susan Gay, Matt Kotowski

Absent Members: H. Guardenier, W. Shattuck, A. Page, M. Austin

Also present: LeeAnne Connolly, Administrator Conservation; John Appleton, newspaper reporter

Grace opened the meeting at 7 pm. - *Informational - only 2 voting members.*

Grace asked opinion of bringing the Right to Farm Welcome page to the Board of Selectmen for their approval? Dan thought that would be a good idea.

Grace attended a seminar regarding forestry practices, and she gave a brief of what the sessions entailed. She said there were only 25 people at the seminar and it was very interesting. They are looking at areas of the State of MA and trying to place people to do landowner education. There is a website Masswoods.net, which has calculations and timber sales. She noted that if someone is interested in cutting on their property, they have a forester mark trees and invite sealed bids on the job.

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LeeAnne Connolly came to the meeting at 7:30 pm to show the members an application for an Agriculture Protection Restriction. She said it's the first APR submitted in for the last 15 years. The applicant is E. Land, who owns a 16 acre parcel off Warren Wright Street. She showed a picture and said it abuts property in the town of Amherst. She states Mr. Land hays this field and wishes to continue to do so. The APR will insure that there will be a perpetual clause that no development can take place on the parcel.

LeeAnne said the parcel be appraised next, and the State of MA will perform that part of the application. She noted that the Town of Belchertown will need to put in 10% of the price. She gave a possible cost of \$200,000. and said our part would be to put in \$20,000. She said the percentage a town usually bears is 20%. She said in that we have an Agricultural Committee, that discounts it by 5%, and in that we have a Right to Farm Bylaw, that discounts it by another 5%.

Grace said it is a good beginning, and may generate some interest in the APR program to preserve property.

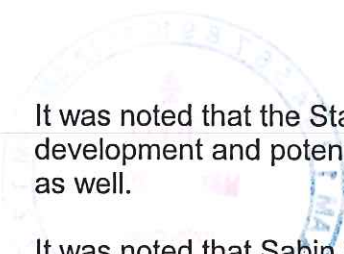
The Agricultural Committee left room 104 and went to the Board of Selectmen (BoS) with LeeAnne to support her in the APR for E. Land.

The AgComm sat in and LeeAnne went over all the above information that she had shared with the AgComm. The BoS seemed very pleased with the fact that our portion of the cost is discounted by 10%, as we have the AgComm and the Right to Farm Bylaw. LeeAnne also noted that the Community Protection Act has some cash that is available for this type of land protection and she may go before them with an application for some aid. The BoS noted that this was just what the CPA was there for. They were all in support of Mr. Land's APR application.

John Appleton came in and went over the particulars with LeeAnne.

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Dan noted how the State of MA keeps track of their interests, and that they would follow up with this parcel, should anything develop where the parcel did not remain as stated on the application.



It was noted that the State of MA reviews applications give priority to purchase if there is a threat of development and potential for conversion, and they consider the make up of the soil in their review as well.

It was noted that Sabin Street University of MA orchards are looking into this APR for 416 acres in the Town of Belchertown. The State of MA never granted an APR to itself, and a Trust owns it. Judy said she went to the AgComm Conference. She noted it as uplifting in food and agricultural issues. She noted that Martha's Vineyard was doing an inventory on their agriculture, potential land, water source, and food needs and asking what can the island produce.

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Grace said the AgComm would again sponsor the annual Tractor Show on the town common, to be held on July 10 and 11, 2010.

Grace noted that Austin's Farm will have their annual Oxen plow demonstration on April 25, 2010 at 9 am.

The next AgComm meeting will be May 18, 2010.

Adjourned at 9 pm.

Minutes submitted by S. Gay