

Agricultural Commission
July 18, 2006

Held at New England Small Farms Institute (N.E.S.F.I.)

Members: G. Adzima, J. Gillan, H. Guardenier, W. Shattuck;
S. Gay and A. Page, Associate Members

Also present: R. Rizzo, S. Johnson, D. Beaudette, N. Beaudette, J. Metcalf

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J. Gillan briefed the board and audience on the history of N.E.S.F.I.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Minutes from the June 20,, 2006 meeting were acknowledged.
Motion W. Shattuck as written, Second G. Adzima, Vote 4-0.

Judy Metcalf, Director of Public Health came to the meeting to discuss horse manure management. Information sheets were handed out to all present: a draft for discussion; and, a question and answer sheet on "Manure Management for Healthy Horses". Mrs. Metcalf told the group that there are Mass General Laws, where you can see laws - requiring licensing and regulation of horse stables, but she prefers to educate horse owners by getting the message out for proper manure management.

Discussion was held regarding horse ownership in residential areas, and how people call with the public health office with concerns about animals in residential settings, and she feels that if the owners of horses were educated on this management process, there would be less risk to animals health as well as the water supply. Discussed how to accomplish this education process.

Mrs. Metcalf noted she would like input from the Agricultural Commission (AgComm) regarding management practices with horses. She will develop a draft, and ask the AgComm to review it, before it is sent to horse owners.

J. Gillan noted there is a library in the N.E.S.F.I. barn for education as well, and the library is open seven days a week. Discussed facts, and noted how people may house a horse on typically less than one acre, (which is 43,560 square feet). In fact, an owner may house a horse on a lot within an open space community development (OSCD), or less than ½ acre.

Discussed ways in which people may use or dispose of manure. N.E.S.F.I. is working with an agricultural composting business that is interested in establishing a facility at NESFI. They will be interested in taking in stable manure from local horse owners. Items such as cost, etc. are not in place at this time. It was noted that composting manure on small properties is difficult, and people need to have a "use" for the compost as well. R. Rizzo said he would like the Conservation Commission (Con Com) to be involved in this management plan.

Everyone agreed this is a sensitive area regarding horse owners, and that people don't want to be told how to manage their housing of horses. J. Metcalf noted that it is the job of the Board of Health to advocate animal health, and this is a step in the right direction. She will come back to the AgComm in September with a draft. R. Rizzo noted he will bring this subject up at a Con Com meeting.



Noted that *The Sentinel* may be a good place to start the education process, and, there will be video films provided by the Board of Health for local Channel 5.

Motion G. Adzima – the Agricultural Commission will collaborate with the Board of Health on the manure management for healthy horses project, **Second W. Shattuck, Vote 4-0.**

Subject: Right to Farm Laws. G. Adzima said she has reviewed the basic issues of the farm laws. Noted that the AgComm has MA Gen. Law Chapter 613, adopted in 1988 at a town meeting, and they will read and discuss at a future meeting. Also, the AgComm was given homework to review the right to farm law for future discussion.

H. Guardenier noted that the AgComm needs to first come up with their goals and objectives. Other members had their own items of interest to share with the commission. Energy, dairy, mandates by government bodies and neighbor complaint items were touched upon.

The AgComm asked about the Land Use Subcommittee of the Planning Board. S. Gay posts the meetings for the Land Use Subcomm. and will let the AgComm know when their next Land Use meeting is being held.

J. Gillan handed out information on Chapter 61 Regulations. She asked if the members would review this information. W. Shattuck noted that getting in touch with other area town's AgComm's would be helpful. This commission could ask about other town's goals and objectives. There is a website for M.D.A.R. which may have this information on neighboring commissions.

The next meeting will be held on August 15, 2006 at 7 pm, in the Town Hall, 2 Jabish Street.

Motion G. Adzima to adjourn July 18, 2006 at 8:50 pm, **Second W. Shattuck, Vote 4-0.**

Endorsed by a majority of Agricultural Commission members on: 10/17/06
date

G. Adzima

W. Shattuck

H. Guardenier
S. Gay

Minutes of July 18, 2006 typed by S. Gay, Associate Member.