

Agricultural Commission
August 15, 2006



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

Members: G. Adzima, J. Gillan, J. Clements -- Associate Members: S. Gay and A. Page

Also present: D. Beaudette , *Dr. Sue Ellen Johnson*

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 pm.

Minutes from July 18, 2006 meeting will be sent to Judith Gillan for amendments.

A. Page shared an agriculture story regarding farming and appeal periods. He would like to see the commission review the MA General Law, Chapter 613.

Update: J. Clements briefed the commission on the meeting with the Planning Board at their August 8, 2006 meeting. They welcomed the commission, and are glad the groups can work together toward the Community Plan goals.

There is a newly formed Land Use Subcommittee to the Planning Board. S. Gay will let the AgComm know when their next meeting will be held. A. Page noted that he would like to review the map of the town to see where the agricultural zoning is before meeting with the Land Use Subcommittee. The Land Use Subcommittee will be proposing zoning map changes for the Town of Belchertown, as the Town is changing.

The commission decided they would not have a Town Fair booth this year, as they are newly formed and cannot prepare in time. They may ask C. Brown if they could have a small table, or just hand out flyers noting that there is now an Agricultural Commission, when and where they meet at this time.

Went over the "Right to Farm" statement, Chapter 613 from the year 1985, and discussed whether it is a direction for each town to develop their own bylaw. Discussed what constitutes agricultural activity, or "farming". D. Beaudette reviewed local versus state laws, and then he had to leave the meeting (8 pm) S. Gay will get a copy of Chapter 128 for G. Adzima.

J. Clements noted he felt that a "Right to Farm" bylaw for the Town of Belchertown was never formally brought to a Town Meeting. This should be a goal of the AgComm. Discussed how times have changed over 20 years, and what is on the books will need changing. There should be a bylaw to sufficiently protect farms in the Town of Belchertown. J. Clements said he will review Chapter 613, and a "Model Bylaw", and write up a summary.

The commission would like to get input from people on what they feel are the important issues to tackle, and what a "Right to Farm" by should include. Everyone needs to educate themselves and take it from there. Perhaps a statement in *The Sentinel* would be helpful to begin with.

The commission noted that they would like to have an inventory of current farms in Town, and who the farmers are. Noted that the Assessor office has the current towns people who are in a Chapter 61A and may be able to share the farming properties. J. Clements felt the commission needed to have their own Chapter list, and find out what is the present value of agricultural land?

A. Page was concerned that a Board of Health member came to the Farmers Market on Thursday and asked for some vendors to shut down their showing of agricultural products. He said the Health Commissioner said the vendor did not have a "food handler" license.

The AgComm would like to invite J. Metcalf, Director of Public Health to another meeting to go over the "manure management" education statements for *The Sentinel*, and the Farmers Market can be discussed at that time.

G. Adzima noted there may be a regulation coming which would require animal identification tracking, with tags and microchips. This would require tracking from birth to disposal, where and when they leave a premises, and veterinarian visits.

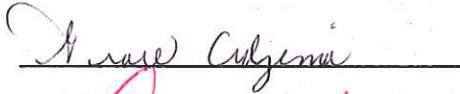
Goals and objectives will be reviewed at the September 19th meeting.

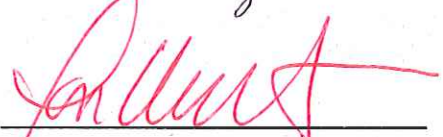
Motion J. Clements to adjourn @ 9:00 pm, **Second** J. Gillan, **Vote** 3-0.

Endorsed by a majority of Agricultural Commission members on:

12/19/06
date







Minutes of August 15, 2006 typed by S. Gay, Associate Member.