

TOWN OF EAST KINGSTON
Agricultural Commission Steering Committee

2010-2011
Chris Castonguay, Chairman
Dr. RA Marston, Vice Chairman

MINUTES
November 11, 2010 Meeting
7:00 pm

AGENDA:

- ◆ Attendance
- ◆ Approval of September minutes
- ◆ Old Business
- ◆ New Business
- ◆ Adjourn

The regular meeting of the Agricultural Steering Committee was called to order at 7:00 pm. Mrs. White was introduced as the Recording Secretary and thanks were given to Deborah Marston for taking the minutes of the September meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Mrs. White called the roll.

MEMBERS: Mr. C. Castonguay, Mr. R. Morales, Dr. RA Marston, Steve White and Recording Secretary Barbara White. Also in attendance were Linda White, Brad Rice, Joann and Norman Brandt, and Eleanor and Richard Hugo.

MINUTES: The minutes of the September 30th meeting, taken by Deborah Marston, were reviewed.

MOTION: Mr. Morales **MOVED** to approve the minutes of September 30th as submitted. Mr. Castonguay seconded. The motion was unanimous.

OLD BUSINESS

Schedule and process for submission of Warrant Article

Mr. Castonguay asked what the procedure to place this article on the ballot was, as he was not familiar with the process. Mr. Morales explained there were two ways to get a warrant article on the ballot - 1) to have the Selectmen endorse it, which is what they were going to do, or 2) by a Citizen's Petition. They were taking the Warrant Article route. The Board discussed how to go about having it included on the ballot. Mrs. White was certain all she needed to do was to submit it to the Selectmen's Office to be included, but will check and get back to the Board.

Support of the Planning Board, Selectmen's Office and the Conservation Commission will need to be clarified in supporting documents that are included in the packets to the residents, as additional notes are not allowed on warrant articles in SB2 towns. The Committee would have a chance to explain why an Agricultural Commission would be good for East Kingston at the Deliberative Session.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of Warrant Article

The proposed warrant article, as submitted by Mrs. White, was reviewed and edited. The only changes were a slash (/) added between the words shall be and shall have been and the words Agricultural Steering Committee was added.

To see if the Town will vote to establish an East Kingston Agricultural Commission, pursuant to RSA 674:44-e through g; RSA 673:1, II; RSA 673:4-b; RSA 673:7 II, 10, 14, I, 18, 20 and 21.

The membership section 673:4-b I, prescribed manner of appointment: It is proposed that the governing body of the town (Board of Selectmen) shall appoint seven (7) regular members and five (5) alternate members to the East Kingston Agricultural Commission. Whenever possible, the majority of both regular and alternate members shall be/ shall have been actively engaged in agricultural pursuits. Upon passage of the warrant article, current regular and alternate members of the East Kingston Agricultural Steering Committee shall automatically be nominated to the new East Kingston Agricultural Commission to serve the remainder of their existing terms. Subsequently, all new members shall be selected from a list of nominees provided to the governing body by the existing East Kingston Agricultural Commission.

Comparing this warrant article with North Hampton's, there was dialogue about the number of members to be appointed, both regular and alternate. After discussion it was determined it was in the best interest of the Board to leave the numbers as stated above as it provided for flexibility of membership. If it were limited to a lesser number, they would need to go back to the Town on the next warrant to get any change in the number approved. Submitting it as written allowed for room to grow as interest progressed.

MOTION: Mr. Castonguay MOVED to approve the warrant article as amended. Mr. Morales seconded. The motion was unanimous.

Mr. Morales also noted the warrant article should be reviewed by the Planning Board before submitting it to be placed on the warrant. The Planning Board's next meeting is on November 18th, and if they have no further recommendations, Mrs. White will send to the Selectmen's Office for placement on the ballot.

Membership

Mr. Morales asked if there was anyone present who had an interest in being on the Board. Brad Rice stated he would like to participate and was invited to the table to join the members. Welcome to Brad.

Mr. Morales also stated that between he and Dr. Marston, only one of them would be allowed to serve on the Agricultural Commission as they were both current members of the Planning Board. Mr. Morales's preference was for Dr. Marston to continue on the Board as Vice Chairman as he was a farmer and had the most knowledge. Dr. Marston agreed he would continue to serve. Mr. Morales would continue to be involved in the Committee, and later as a resident.

Communications Plan - What information do we present to the residents to inform them and how do we get the information to them?

How to get Information to Residents: Members conferred on the best way to get the information out to the residents to spark interest and make them aware of why this article on the warrant would be important to the Town.

Several ways to disseminate the information was discussed: Community News articles in the Exeter Newsletter and the Carriage Town News, and perhaps a dedicated article for Kathleen Bailey for the Exeter Newsletter. Mr. Castonguay will write the article. Mrs. White will check on the deadlines for Community News articles with the newspapers, and Mr. Morales will clarify what the deadline for articles by Kathleen Bailey is. Also discussed was a separate flyer to be included in the Carriage Town News. Mrs. White will investigate costs associated with that.

Information could be left at the library, town offices, post office, Jewett's, Town Hall, Pound School, Dodge's AGWay, etc. to make people aware of what the committee is trying to accomplish.

It was noted it would be a good thing to contact the elementary school to disseminate information about the proposed Agricultural Commission to the children for them to bring home. Joann Brandt explained that it would need to go SAU 16 to be approved before that could happen, and she would contact Sally Boyd to see if we could proceed in this.

Information should also be included on the website under the Planning Board. Mrs. White will post the meeting schedule and minutes, also members of the committee and their phone numbers.

The Deliberative Session

The board needs to have all their information ready to include in the packets with the town report at the deliberative session on February 9. Also members need to be there to explain what they are trying to do, answer questions people may have, and to clarify that it would not cost any money to the town.

Local Produce at the Local Markets

Linda White noted she had asked "On the Vine" why they did not have locally-grown produce and eggs available and they told her it was too expensive for them to buy, and no one would buy it. In discussion, members thought the owner should attend the farmer's market in Exeter and see how crowded it was and the prices people were paying for fresh, locally grown product. If it were available at his store on an on-going basis, people would buy.

At the School

Brad Rice reported that the school had a "What's in your own back yard?" discussion last year with some tables from appropriate vendors. Perhaps they could plan having some display for this next year.

UNH Marine Docents

Mr. Morales noted he had participated in a "Know the Coast Day" at which they familiarized people with the connection between the coast, the environment, and the estuaries and the food products from the seacoast. He thought a similar thing would be done with the farmers. Hold some events, either at a central location or at individual farms to show how the livestock is raised, how crops are grown, how to make maple syrup, etc.

Budget

Mr. Morales noted that the Selectmen had designated \$3,000 budget for the AG Committee. Later it was determined this information was not accurate. Expenses would be rolled into the Planning Board expenses line item as the AG Committee does not have their own budget. Everyone is cautioned from spending anything for the Committee without prior approval from the Selectmen if they expect to be reimbursed. Perhaps sometime in the future they might have their own line item in the budget; for the time being they would need to be frugal.

North Hampton AG Commission

Steve and Linda White had spoken to the North Hampton Agricultural Commission to get information that would be beneficial to us. North Hampton had put on a dinner with food coming from local farms and listed on the menu. He also showed the web page for their Agricultural Commission and thought we should do something similar. Perhaps once we are an actual commission that would be a possibility.

Steve had also put together a bulleted list highlighting things an Agricultural Commission covers, and it was determined it was something that should be up on the website.

UNH Workshops

Mr. Morales explained some of what would be covered in the UNH High Tunnel Workshops and encouraged those interested to attend. He said the Town would pay the fee for members from the budget.

Future Meeting Dates

The December meeting will be on December 2nd. Future meeting dates were decided on the second Thursday of the month: Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Mar. 10 and April 14. Mrs. White will contact the Selectmen's Office to see if those dates are available and get back to the Board.

Master Plan Sections

Mrs. White distributed copies of both the "Agriculture and Conservation" and the "Agriculture in the Master Plan Vision and Goals Chapter" section of the Master Plan to the Board members for their review. The "Agriculture in the Master Plan Vision and Goals Chapter" contains the Farm-Friendly Survey that was completed in 2006.

Schedule for Disseminating Information

Mr. Castonguay asked what schedule they should have for getting all this information out there to the population. Mr. Morales reminded them they were not yet a commission and suggested that what they needed to do was focus on getting the information out about why it was important for people to vote yes on the warrant article to create the AG Commission in the first place; then they could go forward once the commission was established.

Other Ideas

Mr. Hugo noted that the Congregational Church in Exeter had put on a local board dinner with produce from members' gardens, and another group organized a kitchen garden tour.

Mrs. White suggested a garden tour of small gardens, or Brad's maple sugaring process and other endeavors and coordinate the tour in conjunction with the 250th anniversary which is coming up in 2013.

There being no other discussion items, Mr. Castonguay asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Dr. Marston **MOVED** to Adjourn. Mr. Morales seconded. The motion was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara White

Recording Secretary