

TOWN OF EAST KINGSTON
Agricultural Commission Steering Committee

2010-2011
Chris Castonguay, Chairman
Ronald Morales, Vice Chairman

MINUTES
February 10, 2011 Meeting
7:13 pm

We need volunteers to hold a sign in support of the Agricultural Commission at the polls on election day. So far Brad Rice (8-10 am) and Chris Castonguay (6-7 pm) have volunteered. Please contact Barbara White to schedule a time to take a turn holding the sign.

NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MARCH 10.

AGENDA:

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

The regular meeting of the Agricultural Steering Committee was called to order at 7:13 pm.

ATTENDANCE: Mrs. White called the roll.

MEMBERS: Mr. C. Castonguay, Mr. R. Morales, Mr. Brad Rice and Recording Secretary Barbara White. Dr. R. Marston and Mr. Stephen White were not in attendance. Also in attendance was Conservation Commission Chairman Dennis Quintal and East Kingston resident Peter Gilligan.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the January 13th meeting were reviewed and approved.

MOTION: Mr. Morales **MOVED** to approve the minutes of January 13. Mr. Rice seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Poster

The poster had been revised and printed, and Mr. Morales had located them in the various places previously discussed: town office, elementary school, library, post office, Jewett's and Carmen's.

NEW BUSINESS

Warrant Article

Mr. Morales noted that all the members of the Agricultural Committee were in attendance at the Deliberative Session so they would be on hand to answer any questions from the residents. There were no questions asked of the members, and almost every hand of those present was raised to approve the revised article.

Mr. Morales also noted that on the advice of the Town Attorney, the language of the warrant article to be presented on the ballot was changed to read 3 regular and 3 alternate members and shortened significantly.

This is the final approved warrant article.

8. To see if the Town will vote to establish an Agricultural Commission, pursuant to RSA 674:44-e in accordance with RSA 673. The Board of Selectmen shall appoint three (3) regular members and three (3) alternate members.

Mr. Morales noted as per the RSA, there were two ways to form an Agricultural Commission: either the Selectmen could create the Commission or the people could vote on it. They had taken the latter route so they could see if there was actually any interest in having the Commission. It would have made no sense to form a Commission which no one had any interest in.

Organic Farmer Needing Land

Mr. Morales reported that Ted Lloyd had spoken to him in regard to an organic farmer who was needing to rent out some land as his present lease would be up at the end of the growing season; he needed 100-200 acres. Mr. Mahoney also had a high-tunnel operation; Mr. Morales noted he could educate the townspeople on this type of growing if he came to Town. Mrs. White had also spoken to Mrs. Lloyd in regard to the same person and had his name and e-mail address (which she distributed to the members).

The Board discussed several potential places Mr. Mahoney could contact to rent land. The Board asked Mrs. White to make up a list of farmers with potential land to rent from the original contact list the committee had for their initial meeting. As they had discussed several others who were not on the list, she asked Mr. Morales to e-mail those to her for inclusion on the list.

Mr. Morales noted that this was the type of things that the AG Commission would be helpful in; connecting people who had land to rent with those who needed the land.

Mr. Gilligan also noted that they could help pair people in the Town with product to sell (such as pies and cookies, etc) with those with farm stands for a small start, before farmer's markets were established.

Mr. Rice noted his friend had helped set up an Agricultural Commission in Northwood a couple of years ago and would be happy to share information or answer any questions to the Board might have. The only conflict was his Planning Board meeting was the same night as the Ag Committee had their meetings. Mr. Morales noted that they could always schedule an alternate meeting night to speak to him as long as the Pound School and the Secretary would be available on that date.

Additional Newspaper Article

The committee discussed an additional article in the newspapers before the election. Mrs. White will put together an article for the newspapers and inclusion on the website.

The Board determined that posting the article in the Carriage Towne News on March 2nd and the Exeter Newsletter on March 4th (both dates before the election) would be beneficial timing.

Insert for the Annual Report

Mrs. White reported the insert had been copied and folded and was ready for insertion into the annual report.

Additional Insert

Mrs. White also reported that the Planning Board had put an insert in the annual report noting the need for members, and Mrs. White had added a section at the bottom for the need for members on the Agricultural Commission. This insert had also been copied and folded and was ready for insertion into the annual report.

Candidates' Night

Mr. Gilligan plans on attending Candidates Night Wednesday, February 16th and will see if they allow him to speak about the Agricultural Commission. If they do not allow him to speak, at the very least he will ask if the candidates will support it. Mr. Rice and Mr. Castonguay will also try to be there.

Election Day

It was determined the poster would be copied and attached double-sided to a stick and members would take turns holding it in front of the polls on election day, Tuesday March 8. This way they could answer any questions people might have and encourage all voters to vote yes to the warrant article. Mr. Rice volunteered to do it from 8:00-10:00 am and Mr. Castonguay will take from 6:00-7:00 pm unless he is away on business. Mrs. White will notify the Agricultural Committee members to see if she can solicit some more volunteers. Mr. Morales will be helping inside for the election, and will not be allowed to participate.

Grange

Mr. Morales thought if the Agricultural Commission was formed, the Grange and the AG Commission might help each other. It appears that the Grange was not serving all the needs that an AG Commission could do and that was why the RSA had been changed to include an AG Commission. He opined the charter of the proposed AG Commission was more extensive than what the Grange had, but he was not positive. He was hoping they had the support of the Grange.

Next Meeting - The next meeting is scheduled for March 10th at the Pound School.

ADJOURN

MOTION: Mr. Morales **MOVED** to Adjourn. Mr. Castonguay seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara White

Recording Secretary

Approved: _____

Chris Castonguay