

TOWN OF EAST KINGSTON
Agricultural Commission

2011-2012
Brad Rice, Vice Chairman

MINUTES
June 9, 2011 Meeting
7:00 pm

NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON JULY 14

AGENDA

- ◆ Attendance
- ◆ Approval of April minutes
- ◆ Board Business
- ◆ Adjourn

The regular meeting of the Agricultural Commission was called to order at 7:20 pm.

ATTENDANCE: Mrs. White called the roll.

MEMBERS: Steve White, Linda White, Brad Rice (7:20 pm), Chris Castonguay (7:35 pm). Also present was Recording Secretary Barbara White.

BOARD BUSINESS

Chairman Morales has resigned, so Mr. Rice chaired the meeting. The Commission opted not to elect new officers yet as they are hoping Mr. Morales will decide to come back.

Minutes

The April, May and June minutes will be approved at the July meeting.

Discussion

Linda White distributed some information from the Southern NH Resource Conservation and Development Area Council. More information regarding what they offer and if it would be helpful to the Agricultural Commission (AG Comm) at this time will be researched.

The Commission discussed perhaps having someone from one of the other Agricultural Commissions that have been in operation for a while come and talk to us. Not for any type of presentation to the public, but to let us know how they got people interested enough to participate. What steps will we need to take to be successful?

The most important thing for the AG Comm to start with will be to show the residents what the benefits of the commission is. We need to find a way to get the farmers together so they can talk amongst themselves. That is the only way we will find out how we can help them. We also realize we don't have much of a chance to get the farmers to come and talk to us while it is growing season; we will need to wait until the fall/winter to speak to them.

We need to let them know we are not here to institute rules and regulations (we have no power to do that), but to help them in any way we can. We might be able to find volunteers to do some things the farmers need help with (planting, harvesting, etc.); there may be Scouts who need to earn a badge and helping out a farmer would assist them in earning that badge.

We need to show the residents what we can do to help, not just the large farming operations which there are only a few of, but anyone who is interested in farming. Such things as what to plant for your first garden, how to add nutrients to the soil, how to eliminate pests in ways that do not use harsh pesticides, etc.

Mrs. White suggested putting together some sort of questionnaire regarding small gardens, asking the residents what questions they would like to have answered. They could put them in the library, post office, Town Hall, etc and ask them to respond. It might be a place to start.

The Commission might attend a Grange Meeting and see if they can coordinate something with them. Mrs. White will contact Joann Brandt and find out when they meet.

The Commission discussed a "meet your local farmers day". Board members will research where different operations are located and produce a small map. At some point we may be able to organize a Town tour of the farms and all the other various agricultural opportunities in Town - honey, maple syrup, vegetables, plants, etc.

Steve noted that the listed "features" of an agricultural commission would not necessarily be the *benefit* to the farmers. What they need to do is find a way to show the farmers what the benefits would be and get them interested. Linda suggested a fall "*meet your local farmers*" type of get together in the fall at the Town Hall (Grange). If the farmers associated with the large farms did not want to be involved, perhaps all the "niche business" people would be interested.

The Commission thought reconstituting the Old Home Days could be a good way to get everyone together. Mrs. White will find out who used to coordinate that and see if that would be a viable option.

Lind White wanted to know if there was a list of professionals to refer to should someone have a question - who would be connect them with? At the present time, we do not have such a list. The first step in creating this list would be to find out what kind of information is needed so we could know what categories of information we need names for.

Each of the members will stop and talk to the different folks with the niche markets and report back at the next meeting. This way we can get them on our map.

Mr. Rice has joined the Farms Bureau and will share information with the members of the Commission.

Next Meeting - The next meeting is scheduled for July 14 at the Pound School.

ADJOURN

MOTION: Mr. Rice **MOVED** to Adjourn. Mr. White seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara White

Recording Secretary

Approved: _____