



RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK, KILLINGLY, CT
2017 APR 11 AM 10:38

Elizabeth M. W.



Killingly Agriculture Commission

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2017

Regular Meeting

7:00 pm

Killingly Town Hall

172 Main Street, Killingly, CT

ROOM CHANGED TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

MINUTES

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Attending: Frank Anastasio; Byron Martin; Jim Stevens; Tina Stevens; Christel Shaw; & Christine Salisbury, Alternate. Virginia Keith (Alternate) was absent with notification.

Staff: Ann-Marie Aubrey, Director of Planning; and Jonathan Blake, ZEO/Planning Assistant
Town Council Liaison: Adam Griffiths

II. Agenda Addendum

None

III. Public Hearings (as called)

None

IV. Citizens Participation [limited to five (5) minutes per speaker for an accumulated time of no more than 30 minutes – unless extended by a majority vote of the commission members]

John Olenick, 58 Hartford Pike – Open letter to agricultural commission, (staff was not given a copy of this letter) re: proposed regulation changes. Mr. Olenick claimed staff provided inaccurate, unreliable, and outright fake information – undermining the existence of a farmer and his activities. Mr. Olenick stated that the commission should be in favor of all farming activities not just particular activities – should put farmers first, that an attack on any farming activity is an attack on all farming activities. Started to discuss forestry activities; claimed that the proposed regulations regarding forestry were vindictive, written behind closed doors, with no communication to the subcommittee or Ag Commission until they are presented at a meeting. At the end he stated his attorney would be at the next Ag Commission meeting to give the Commission accurate information, about forestry. Mr. Olenick then handed out some information regarding state statutes, and again Mr. Olenick did not provide staff with a copy.

Mr. Olenick was reminded by Mr. Anastasio that his time frame went over 5 minutes – total length of time Mr. Olenick held the floor was over 8 minutes.

Frank Anastasio – Requested that Commission Members take everything under advisement. He explained that there are still 2 to 3 more steps to go before this becomes the final document to be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Frank Anastasio – Stated his comment for the record would be this, as he has explained to Mr. Olenick at other meetings (of both the Ag Commission and the Subcommittee). Mr. Anastasio believes the Commission and Mr. Olenick are on two different wave lengths; 1) What is a farmer and What can farmers do; and 2) What can farmers do in the Town of Killingly given The town's Zoning Districts and Regulations. For example: Can someone on Reynolds Street raise pigs, would that be reasonable to do? I think we have decided over the years, that raising pigs on Reynolds Street (unless you had a lot of acreage on Reynolds Street – not even sure if that would be appropriate) would not be appropriate. Raising a certain number of chickens in the borough would be; but raising more than that number of chickens may not be. So the way the regulations are set up, and have been set up is that the Town of Killingly has to decide and we have to decide what to propose (which is what he have been doing) what is reasonable for farmers to be able to do. So on eight acres I cannot have a big pig farm, and I am probably happy I can't because my neighbors would probably raise holy hell if I had a big pig farm; now if I had a few pigs they probably wouldn't care, but that is eight (8) acres. If I had 1 acre or 2 acres or if I was in a different zone than what is reasonable to expect what someone could do. So there is one issue of what can farmers do given the existing regulations what is reasonable for their zone; and then what is farming. I think we all like to stretch to the limits what farming is; but what farmers can do in certain zones is the question. So please keep that in mind when you (commission members) are reading all of this. Whether forestry is farming, whether pig farming is farming; processing tomatoes into tomato sauce is farming; whether cutting cord wood is farming. Those are questions unto themselves, but the two main issues are: what is farming; and what can farmers do in the Town of Killingly (according to zoning, etc.). That is the commission's goal to figure that out – what makes the most sense for the Town of Killingly and for farming in general, and I think that is what we have been doing.

Byron Martin – Stated that the Agriculture Commission is not a regulatory body, we are just an advisory body and ultimately all that we are doing here has to go before the Planning & Zoning Commission, and they have to agree upon it. Again, we are not regulatory. We are trying to be inclusive as we can for farmers then we have to move forward with what the PZC accept.

Christel Shaw – Wanted to add a personal note; I appreciate all the work Ann-Marie does for us; and I have never seen her act the way she was described in my dealings with her. So I just want to thank her for everything she does for us; whether or not other people agree I just want that stated.

Frank Anastasio – Just wanted to make one more comment, not sure if it already appeared in prior minutes or not. But the general way they have been operating is that we cannot be experts, and we do not have all the time to do all the research into the regulations and the State of Connecticut (or any place else) we just don't have enough time to do that as volunteers. So we rely on the staff to find out that information and present it to us – then we try to incorporate whatever we need to incorporate into our proposed regulations. So that is what has been happening and that's why there are a lot of changes even in tonight's presentation if you weren't at the subcommittee meeting, you will see all the yellow all the underlines all the changes that have been made because this is a work in progress. So we are trying to deal with many, many issues, and we will go from there.

V. Adoption of Minutes – review / discussion / action

- A) Regular Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2017 – Tina Stevens moved to adopt the minutes, Jim Stevens seconded. No further discussion. The vote was 5 / 0 – the motion was approved.
- B) Special Meeting Minutes of February 28, 2017 – Subcommittee Meeting – Regulations – Byron Martin made a motion to adopt the minutes, Jim Stevens seconded. No further discussion. The vote was 5/0 – the motion was approved.

VI. General Business – review / discussion /action

A) 2017 Event Planning – Activities, ETC.

1) Classes

Frank Anastasio – We do have an issue to discuss later. Virginia Keith was going to offer a class on her farm, discussion, questions, whether someone can charge for the class. In our discussions we never finalize whether someone giving classes could charge (Virginia is putting in quite a bit of time, and she will be giving her students seeds, etc.) for classes. So Virginia will pay for the advertisement of her class by herself this time, Frank will promote it through the website and Facebook. We do need to come up with a policy for charging for classes and how to handle that. Virginia will give her class.

Byron Martin – Did his second bee keeping class, February 25th. He had forty (40) people; there was some minor confusion about the list but that seems to be resolved. This class was more involved so some people did leave during the class, only 4 left.

Jim Stevens – Wants to wait just a bit more to schedule a class.

2) Other Events

Frank Anastasio – The Last Green Valley requests –conservation minded – Earth Day Every Day – from 11 to 2 – trying to get 25 people to set up tables indoors – at QVCC – AG Comm, Mother Nature’s Garden and Community Garden – wants to set up a booth for all three (3) groups. Marcy Dolly is organizing – it was determined that the event would take place April 18, 2017 from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at QVCC.

B) Open Space Land Acquisition Committee / Farmland Inventory

No Meeting for the month of February.

C) Mother Nature’s Garden – meeting / progress report

“Our Stars of Freedom Veterans’ Garden” – have approval from all 5 branches of the service to use their insignia; the marble for the monument was donated, being prepped for installation. MNG is also now linked through AMAZON SMILE site – so when you order from AMAZON you can select MNG as your charity of choice.

D) Killingly Community Garden – meeting / progress report

They have purchased most of their seeds, trying to get in touch with Beth (Knowlton) regarding the start of seeds. Trying to get Wayland some help with starting their website as the student volunteers are no longer working on that. Frank said he would talk to Wayland regarding that. Trying to work on their classes, Kerry is working on those. They are talking about their 5 year plan about what they want to teach people. They recently re-elected all of their officers.

Frank talked about a meeting SE Connecticut Conservation Group organizing a regional network of community gardens. They are trying to get all community gardens in area together to help all of them succeed. The Pomfret Wolf Den is a very successful community gardens. In April they will hold a conference of community gardens – try to bump up regional approach to community gardens.

E) Tomato Festival – meeting / progress report

AG COMM subcommittee has met twice, reviewed what was done in the past, and scheduled meetings for the year, art projects from the VO-AG art classes. Staff will work on the tomato matching game if KBA no longer wants to do it. The larger group has its first meeting tomorrow morning. People are already expressing an interest in the Festival – we have reached out for more volunteers. Some of our prior volunteers can no longer commit the time and work that is necessary. Ad on Facebook and an ad in the Turnpike Buyer – hope new people will volunteer. Frank sent an email to the Farmers' Market to ask if they are willing to participate.

F) Green News Newsletter – meeting / progress report

Christel Shaw is working on the newsletter. Has an article from Byron, Conservation Commission article is in. If anyone wants to add anything please let her know. She is looking to get the newsletter by March 21, 2017, spring equinox time frame. Has three articles now, just looking for some more information – the ideal date to receive would be by the beginning of next week. April 13th.

VII. Regulations – review / revisions / discussion / action

A) Town of Killingly Zoning Regulations Section 585 “Agriculture” – review / discussion / action

Frank, we met on the February 28th to review this – no changes have been made since that time. Most of it has not been changed. Frank, the forestry items were some of the changes, and Ann-Marie has been working very hard how to put things into words; Christina had some suggestions of other items that farmers may add regarding “added value” projects. Adam – question about HULL Processing, Byron still has that question. Looking at the difference between processing and manufacturing, looking at SIC and NAICS – simply put processing is when you grow the item on the property, manufacturing is when you bring in outside products (items from off-site); (additional products whatever that product may be). Byron, large forest product facility – HULL – is that company recognized by the state as farmers? Hull Forest Products is listed in the DEEP listing for Primary Wood Processing Directory (Forestry Division) – Ann-Marie read from list – considering sawmills companies not a farm. Frank what do we want to propose to PZC – define farming, what operations are farming, and in what sections of the town can that farming take place? If you raise cows and you process cows, those two items are very different. If you raise tomatoes and you process tomatoes, those two items are very different. The processing of something is a distinct operation from the growing of something; and we must address all of that for all of the community and all operations and determine what the town is going to allow in certain zones of the town.

Byron – we want to help the farmers; however, we do not want processors to call themselves farmers when they are not farming. Byron- In my opinion farming is the growing, caring and cultivation of food (plants/animals) or fiber, etc. Byron then talked about the 50% (51%) which it was set at – that allows farmers to bring items in from other farms when necessary. Discussion about farmer markets exemptions – what the process is required from the state. Farmers Market is even stricter than we want to be – we want 51% of it grown on your property. But there is a point in time when you move from being a farm into a business – not actually raising the product on site anymore. We want farmers to be able to expand, but we still have to take zoning into account.

Adam Griffiths – Mentioned that the regulations use to be even stricter, where it had to be all grown on site, now we allow people to go to 51% which gives them a huge advantage over the way it used to be. Frank stated that when he started it had to be 100% grown on his real estate.

Adam mentioned livestock – you want 100% of livestock grown on your farm – because you don't want someone else's problem mixed in with your meat.

Adam – noise is always a concern when you are running machinery. Have we dealt with that? It was in the February 28, 2017 issues. Ann-Marie – Industrial to residential zone; buffer zones are anywhere from 25 to 50 feet. However while doing research into buffers, we saw 50 feet, 75 feet, and 100 foot buffers for noise. Jonathan – we also looked at the Town Ordinances regarding buffers. Ann-Marie – village commercial and next to residential zone supposed to be a 25 foot buffer zone which includes

screening. Our regulations refer to planted screenings, refers to arborvitaes, height, because it is not only a sound barrier it is to block the view from the residential zone. Adam said that is not just in the agriculture section; that it is throughout our zoning regulations. Jonathan – buffer zones, used to protect the nature of the neighborhood and the quality of life of the residents. Adam – referred to farming activities that are not on going, but then he noted certain activities that are on-going should not interfere with the neighborhood. Jonathan – planted screening between “incompatible uses”; and he read the remainder of the definition found in Article III, Definitions of the zoning regulations. Discussion continued regarding “noises” and town ordinances, etc. how far away must you be to make sure the noise is not interfering – “the right to quiet enjoyment of your property”. Byron – it comes down to the decibels at the boundary line; Adam added to include the view as well.

B) Borough of Danielson Zoning Regulations Section 580 “Agriculture” – review / discussion / action
- Borough – review / discussion / action

Frank / Ann-Marie gave commission members copies of the Borough of Danielson zoning regulations. Frank – if we propose any changes in the Borough regulations then they have to go to the Borough Council before going through the Planning & Zoning Commission. Requested that members review this prior to the next meeting.

VIII. Other Discussion Items – review / discussion / action

The fees we might charge to have a class. Frank and Byron thought they may have decided – they were not sure if it was in the minutes someplace. Frank’s memory – if the farmer wanted to charge a fee they would be able to do so; and that the fee the farmer was charging would not be passed through the Town, because it becomes a bookkeeping issue. Should the farmer pay for the advertising? Frank thinks the farmer should not have to pay for the advertising; the AG COMM has funds in its budget for just this type of thing. Byron thinks that was the resolution when Linda was still here. Christel asked about what would happen if the check was made out to the Town of Killingly? Then the Finance Department would have to get involved. Tina – that is what we are supposed to be promoting. Frank referred to the way that the Recreational Department does it – they get a percentage of the fees since the RD pays for all of the advertising. Ann-Marie to check with Sean to verify what the Town Policy should be on this; vote will most likely take place next month. Reimbursement for knowledge and materials that the people in the class.

IX. Next Meeting - Wednesday, APRIL 12, 2017 – Room 102

X. Adjournment

Byron made a motion to adjourn; Jim seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ann-Marie Aubrey
Director Planning & Development