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Elizabeth M. Wilson



Killingly Agriculture Commission

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2017

Regular Meeting

7:00 pm

Killingly Town Hall

172 Main Street, Killingly, CT

ROOM 102

MINUTES

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Attending – Frank Anastasio; Byron Martin; Christel Shaw; Virginia Keith

Absent without Notice – Christina Salisbury

Staff – Ann-Marie Aubrey, Director Planning & Development

Town Council Liaison – Adam Griffith

Public Attending – Adam Hunt, Killingly Resident, Upper Maple Street, Danielson Farm

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]

None at This Time

V. Adoption of Minutes – review / discussion / action

A) Regular Meeting of April 12, 2017 – Byron Martin made a motion to adopt; motion was seconded by Christel Shaw – Vote was 3/0 with one abstention (Virginia Keith) – Motion Passed.

B) Regular Meeting of May 10, 2017 (already approved on 07/12/2017).

B) Regular Meeting of June 14, 2017 (none, canceled due to lack of quorum).

C) Regular Meeting of July 12, 2017 – Christel Shaw made a motion to adopt; motion was seconded by Virginia Keith – Vote was 4/0 – Motion Passed.

D) Regular Meeting of August 09, 2017 – Byron Martin made a motion to adopt; motion was seconded by Christel Shaw – Vote was 4/0 – Motion Passed.

E) Regular Meeting of September 13, 2017 (no quorum//no business conducted/no votes taken)

VI. General Business – review / discussion /action

A) 2017 Event Planning – Activities, ETC.

1) Classes

- a. Virginia Keith conducted a low tunnel class at the Community Garden, there were approximately 8 to 9 attendees; went through the steps how to build such a tunnel, planted the tunnel. It was noted that some plants have already come up. Plants consisted of lettuce, spinach, carrots, onions and beets.
- b. Byron Martin is willing to do another bee class in the spring.
- c. Frank Anastasio is considering doing a grape pruning class in the spring.

2) Other Events

Coventry Farmers – Virginia Keith and another farmer conducted an introduction to poultry. Virginia and her friend may do another class in the spring.

B) Open Space Land Acquisition Committee / Farmland Inventory

Byron Martin - Nothing new to report.

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

Christel Shaw – Veteran's Garden, Bridge of Flowers. MNG is holding a fundraiser on November 1, 2017 at the Club 99 in Killingly Plaza; it will be from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm – where 15% of your bill can be donated to the MNG Veterans' Garden. The next meeting of the MNG is Thursday, October 19, 2017 at 10:00 am.

D) Killingly Community Garden – meeting / review / discussion / action

Christel Shaw – They spent a Saturday morning cleaning out the shed; scheduling an end of year clean out of the garden itself. The Website is up, and they have a volunteer, Heather Goodier to handle public relations; Carrie is looking into conducting another Canning Class; Jessica / Virginia Keith to work on soil samples; Wayland will talk to Beth Knowlton to see if a vo-ag class can plant cover crops for the winter.

(NOTE: Below is a very brief outline of the motion made by Virginia Keith, and seconded by Byron Martin; and the responses thereto. If the reader requests specific information it is suggested the reader request a copy of the sound file of the meeting.)

Virginia Keith made a motion to disband the Killingly Community Garden Officer Team. The motion further stated that garden shed be re-padded and the garden itself be locked; that all town purchased materials, and any financial records be turned over to the town as soon as possible; that the Garden website, Facebook page and signs (at the garden) be discontinued or removed as soon as possible; that the AG COMM assists Louise Lee of the Elks with the completion of this year's Elks grant requirements. Lastly, that the AG COMM, along with the Town determine the future course for the (garden)property and fixed assets (garden tools, etc.) currently located at the 79 Westfield Avenue, the site of the KCG.

Byron Martin seconded the motion for discussion and possible action.

Virginia Keith then went on to explain her reasoning behind the motion; Virginia listed a number of concerns with regard to the garden that she had gathered from interviewing members of the general public; prior and current gardeners; the local food pantry staff; town hall staff; the Elks (a representative(s) thereof); and the designer (for Linda Walden's Memorial Garden). Virginia had been interviewing people since July, when she was first asked to become involved with the KCG.

Some basic concepts Virginia reported on were:

- The lack of communication on the part of KCG Leadership Team;
- The lack of planning and follow through for garden oversight, and maintenance;
- The lack of donations to the food pantry;
- The lack of educational workshop offerings;

- The lack of outreach for volunteers;
- The probability that the Elks will not renew the community garden grant

At the end of Virginia's presentation the group spoke at length regarding the various issues that were mentioned during the presentation.

Christel Shaw defended the group; asked about the "Garden Coordinator" that the AG COMM suggested looking into at the last AG COMM meeting. Chris stated that the group has done everything that has been asked of them. Chris blamed the change in the staff support over the past two years. Chris also blamed the water situation at the school.

Ann-Marie explained the change in staff over the past two years, and that other groups dealt with the same changes in staff. As far as the water situation goes, the garden still had the capability to hook up a hose – she then referred to Virginia and reminded the group that Virginia stated it only took her a few minutes to hook up the water. So water was/is still available to the group.

Byron Martin felt that the skills to run the garden just were not there. That they should be active gardeners there, that is appears this "leadership" group is not engaged. They do not actively garden at the community garden.

Frank Anastasio also mentioned the Garden Coordinator, and maybe that is something that should seriously be looked into. There was some discussion regarding a coordinator and what it would take to put a coordinator in place, and to make sure that the person realizes it would be seasonal, and they would not be a hire/employee of the Town of Killingly. There was some other discussion regarding prior conversations regarding hiring a coordinator. Frank discussed how the Farmers' Market hired a coordinator for a season. Frank feels that a Garden Coordinator could work for the community garden.

Frank then moved the conversation back to garden group – Even if the skills are not there, how do we go about to assist them to get those skills? Do we really need to disband the group? Could we disband them as leaders and still ask them to be volunteers? Could we help this group reach their potential? What needs to be done to complete the Elks grant – is there a way we can find out?

Byron stated we (AG COMM) have got to determine how we want to move forward. Do we have to disband the group; or do we try to help it become more functional?

Frank asked when the next meeting of the KCG was scheduled - Chris and Ann-Marie responded Wednesday, November 1, 2017. Frank suggested that the AG COMM attend the November 1, 2017 meeting of the KCG. Ann -Marie noted that even though it would be a regular meeting of KCG, it would be a special meeting of the AG COMM. She would need to post an agenda as such. Jonathan would also need to post an agenda and notify KCG of the AG COMM attending.

Prior to the end of the meeting, Byron Martin withdrew his second, and Virginia Keith removed her motion. This was done to allow the meeting of November 1, 2017 to be a discussion between the two groups; however, AG COMM would still maintain the ability to assist the group, or disband the group at a later date (through another motion), if they still felt the need to do so.

AG COMM members will be at the November 1, 2017 meeting; to continue the discussion with the KCG team; explain the responsibilities and how to meet them. Representatives of the Elks will most likely be there also.

(Continued next page)

E) Tomato Festival – meeting / progress report

Was a great success, a lot of people attended, the only problem was the “loudness” of the band in the gazebo. Start planning in January for next year.

F) Green News Newsletter – meeting / progress report

Chris plans to send out another newsletter on October 23rd or October 24th; the deadline for submittals is October 20th. We are up to 116, and may have grown to 130 subscribers.

VII. Regulations – review / revisions / discussion / action

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

Noting the time – any discussion on these regulations was tabled until the next meeting.

Frank asked anyone have any comments? Ann-Marie stated that we still need to clarify some of the definitions. Frank wants a copy of the table of uses; and asked about the borough.

Ann-Marie briefly explained how the borough regulations are separate.

VIII. Other Discussion Items – review / discussion / action

Adam Griffiths, Town Council Liaison – discussed not spending all of the allotted funds – and why such funds are needed if not spent.

Ann-Marie was asked to come up with some sort of expenditure budget – advertisements for classes, garden coordinator, etc. Frank – how do we want to spend the money?

IX. Next Meeting - Wednesday, November 8, 2017

X. Adjournment

Byron made the motion to adjourn and Virginia seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm