



Killingly Agriculture Commission

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2017

SPECIAL MEETING / WORKSHOP SESSION WITH KILLINGLY COMMUNITY GARDEN

7:00 pm

Killingly Town Hall

172 Main Street, Killingly, CT

ROOM 102

MINUTES

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
KILLINGLY, CT
2017 NOV 1 PM 2:59
Elizabeth A. Wilson

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call – 7:15 – Frank Anastasio, Chris Shaw, Virginia Keith, and Byron Martin present.
Killingly Community Garden Committee: Wayland Leonard, Jess Viens, Carrie Carter, John Colbridge, Samantha Abbamonte, Brittany Evans. Others present: Jonathan Blake, staff liaison for Killingly Community Garden; Eric Rumsey, staff liaison for Killingly Agriculture Commission; Heather Goodier, Cory Smith, Kyle Spalding, William Souka, Andrew Larson, Wayne Keith, Adam Griffiths, Louise Lee.
- II. Workshop Meeting with Killingly Community Garden Committee
 - a) Introduction – AG COMM (review/discussion/action) – Virginia Keith gave an introduction to the joint workshop meeting. She spoke about being a volunteer for the town, accountability, and that the purpose of the meeting is to help develop goals and strategies for a successful garden. Frank Anastasio gave a brief history of the garden and its founding members.
 - b) 2017 Garden Report – short term and long term (review/discussion/action) – Virginia handed around a report she had developed totaling the work days and volunteer hours spent working at the garden. The report was discussed and additional volunteer hours were discussed and added. Carrie and John both added approximately 30 hours each watering the garden. Wayland added 40 to 45 hours creating the website and pamphlet designs. Chris asked why the executive board had to count volunteer hours. It was explained that for grants, and time management purposes volunteer hours should be counted. Eric stated as an example that the Conservation Commission volunteers typically between 1000 and 1500 hours each year and that the Community Garden in its growing season may want to set a goal of 500 hours. Heather asked about volunteering at the Tomato Festival and if those hours should count. Those hours should be included in any total of volunteer hours. Virginia made contact and spoke or attempted to speak with gardeners who have had plots at the Community Garden either this growing season, or in the past. Gardeners expressed frustration and a lack of communication by the Community Garden. She documented and presented suggestions from gardeners. Suggestions included: Advertising so community members

are aware of the garden and therefore easier to sign up; Meetings with gardeners should take place; There should be a shared gardener list with contact information; Easy access to water.

Carrie asked to read into the record a cooperative response to audio from the October 11, 2017, Regular Meeting of the Agriculture Commission. The letter was in response to a motion to disband the KCG made by Virginia Keith, seconded by Byron Martin. It was suggested that the motion was hostile and aggressive towards the KCG and volunteers such as Heather. The KCG would like an explanation as to why the motion was made. Specifically, the letter addressed the portion of the motion and discussion regarding the designer and planting, and payment/invoices. Further, the letter addressed the accusation that the bed was not prepared for the low tunnel class held by Virginia. It also addressed donations to the food pantry. The letter blames staff for slowdowns and projects not going through. It was questioned why Virginia did not bring her concerns to the KCG, rather than going "over their heads" to the Agriculture Commission. The KCG feels that they can no longer work with Virginia any longer and they would like the motion stricken from the record. Eric, Adam, and Jonathan all stated that a motion may not be stricken from the record, however that in this instance the motion was withdrawn and no action taken.

Virginia responded to the letter stating that as a volunteer and a commission member, she has a responsibility to the community. She was concerned when a community member asked staff why the garden was abandoned. Staff went and took pictures for the Agriculture Commission. (John Colbridge left the meeting at 8:09PM) She apologized for making the motion, explaining that she believed the only way to introduce the item for discussion was to make a strong motion. Her intention was not to offend the KCG, rather to introduce a topic of discussion in order to help the KCG make the garden successful.

Wayland responded citing many successes and accomplishments over the last 4 years including donations to the Friends of Assisi, hanging the scale in the shed, and the many planting and cleanup days. Wayland presented several letters of support for the garden and the KCG. (The letters were not read into the record, copies of the letters are available upon request).

Sam also responded. She stated that she joined the KCG in January of 2017, and attained the position of treasurer. She had hoped to bring her skills in grant writing and scheduling to the group.

Brittany stated that the group believes in the community garden, and that the KCG has done everything asked of them, yet feels as if it is never good enough.

Jess stated that the group made it clear that they were having problems with the garden and was looking for help. She believed that the motion accused them of theft and was not pleased to hear that be put to light. She asked Jonathan if he stated that Jess had sent a check and needed to call the designer to cancel the check. Jonathan stated that, yes he had. He also stated that the audio was available from that meeting and would be happy to play it if it would bring some closure to the argument. Jess stated that she would like to hear the audio. Eric played the audio from the September 6, 2017 regular meeting of the KCG starting at 7:24 until 8:05. The audio states that Jess will have to cancel a check she sent to the designer. The designer told Virginia that he never received a check from Jess. Jess then stated that she had not actually mailed the check, and was able to void it herself.

Frank stated that the Agriculture Commission needs to discuss at their November 8, 2017 Regular Meeting how the Agriculture Commission interacts with the KCG. Frank asked the KCG if they had any suggestions to please present them to them prior to the next meeting.

Adam Griffiths asked for a way for both the KCG and AG can move forward. He cited a disconnect of communication as a common theme. He believes that everyone here wants the Community Garden to be successful and to find the best way moving forward. With clearly defined parameters practically in regard to payment protocols. He didn't believe that Ms. Keith had said anything in

malice that everything she has been saying she has been trying to help. He asked that the problems be identified so that they can be corrected and they can move forward.

Jess motioned to table items C-J until the December 6th regular meeting of the KCG. Sam second, all approved.

Note: Killingly Community Garden adjourned at 8:50 PM. Wayland Leonard, Jess Viens, Carrie Carter, Samantha Abbamonte, Brittany Evans, Heather Goodier, Cory Smith, Kyle Spalding, William Souka, Andrew Larson left the meeting at this time.

Agriculture Commission: The commission discussed the best time to meet regarding the commission's stance on the KCG. Byron motioned to hold a special joint meeting December 6th. Chris second, all approved.

- c) Plus/Delta Exercise - (review/discussion/action) – Tabled to December 6th.
- d) Putnam Community Garden Visit Recap (review/discussion/action) – Tabled to December 6th.
- e) Review Goals – short and long term (review/discussion/action) – Tabled to December 6th.
- f) 2018 Growing Season – goals, plans, suggestions (review/discussion/action) – Tabled to December 6th.
- g) Community Outreach / Educational Programs (review/discussion/action) – Tabled to December 6th.
- h) Grant Requirements (review/discussion/action) – The commission and Louise Lee spoke regarding the Elk's Beacon Grant for 2017 & 2018. She expressed concern regarding the lack of donations to Friends of Assisi. Louise said, "She will have a fight on her hands" getting the 2018 Beacon Grant for KCG; due to the lack of communication and commitment from the KCG. She stated that she is trying to advocate for the Community Garden as a member of the Elks and as a Resident of Killingly but it is tough. She said that The Elks are frustrated in the lack of communication and lack of effort by the KCG; that the garden appeared abandoned.
- i) Management Review (review/discussion/action) – Tabled to December 6th.
- j) New Business (review/discussion/action) – Tabled to December 6th.

III. Adjournment – Motion to adjourn at 9:15 PM by Byron Martin. Chris second, and all approved.