

Lanesborough Agricultural Commission Meeting Minutes – January 11, 2007

Attendees: regular members - Prudy Barton, Pete Gallant
alternate members - Darlene Newton, Aimee Thayer Absent - Marv Michalak

The meeting opened at 7:08 p.m. in the Planning Board Room at the Lanesborough Town Hall.

Review of Minutes - The minutes from December 6th were reviewed by the commission. A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept them as written. Aimee voted as an alternate member in Marv Michalak's absence.

Old Business

1. Hancock Shaker Village Workshop -The Commission had a general discussion regarding the AgCom workshop at Hancock Shaker Village on December 9, 2006. Prudy, Pete and Aimee attended and picked up extra information for Darlene and Marv. The members who had attended agreed the workshop provided good resource outlets and contact information for support. Also, many of Ag Commissions in the county were in their beginning stages and would be developing their agendas concurrent with our own.
2. Darlene was given the handbook to review and agreed to pass it on to Marv when she was finished with it.
3. Between Ag Com meeting, Joe Novak from Adams invited AgCom members and Conservation Commission (ConCom) members to attend an informational meeting in Adams regarding the relationship between agricultural activities and wetland regulations. Prudy was the only member able to attend on the short notice given, however Charlene Appel-Kreisworth of Lanesborough's ConCom was also in attendance. The presentation and discussion was led by Mark Stinson who is the Department of Environmental Conservation circuit rider for these issues in Berkshire County. He indicated that regular farm maintenance, unless in an area of rare or endangered species, is generally exempt from wetland regulations. If the land had not been farmed in several years the applicant would be well advised to check with the ConCom if work is necessary. Farmers were encouraged to keep good records including photos, receipts and other information to prove viability of the agricultural enterprise. Hobby farmers and part timers were advised to check with the ConCom before work is undertaken. Jurisdiction for oversight of the wetland regulations is with the Conservation Committee.

New Business

1. Commission members and alternates were given sample farm inventory surveys provided at the Hancock Shaker workshop from the towns of Carver and Dartmouth to review before the next meeting with the purpose of developing a survey for Lanesborough farmers. Methods of distribution were discussed along with the fact that the Ag Com has no budgeted funds from the town. Pete mentioned that the Select Board has some discretionary funds which might pay for a mailing or something of that nature. Aimee also pointed out that the Planning Board had been financially supportive during the steering committee mailings and may be willing to help out again.
2. Following up on Pete's suggestion of December 6, Prudy provided some AgCom Mission statement ideas for review and comment. The suggestions and discussion produced the following:
 - To represent and inventory agricultural interests in Lanesborough.
 - To interface with other town of Lanesborough boards and other local and regional AgComs.
 - To promote and encourage continued and new agricultural production in Lanesborough
 - To be available to non-farming residents to field questions regarding agriculture in town.
1. The commission discussed the possibility of inviting the town animal inspector, Craig Swinson of Richmond to attend one of our upcoming meetings to discuss what his responsibilities are etc. Aimee will contact him to invite him to a meeting. Also, the possibility of organizing an informational meeting with other AgComs in the county with Dr. Mach, the State Veterinarian was brought up and will be further discussed.

Adjournment and next meetings

Upcoming meeting dates were set for February 8, March 8, and April 12, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. each date in the Planning Board Room at Lanesborough Town Hall.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to adjourn at 8:35 p.m.