

# Woodstock Agricultural Commission

Regular Meeting, Town Hall, Room A, 1 pm, Monday, Feb 12, 2018

**Members Present:** Stewart Morse, Richard Norman, Paul Miller, Lynn Weaver, Rebecca Hyde

**Public Present:** Grace Jacobsen, Dottie Durst, Maura Robie, Barbara Morse

**Call to order:** Meeting called to order at 1 pm.

**Seat alternates** Lynn Weaver moved to seat Paul Miller as a full member, Richard Norman seconded, **All in favor.**

**Review of January minutes:** Paul Miller motioned to approve the October minutes as presented, Stewart Morse seconded, **all in favor.**

## Public participation

Dottie Durst reported that she had been to a workshop in Ashford on Protecting Family Farms and Forests. There are some interesting programs afoot to assist with forest protection and community land acquisitions.

Maura Robie spoke about a Regional Conservation Partnership Project she is working on, as part of her job with the Eastern CT Conservation District. The program is Federally funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This one concerns soil health and water quality in the Thames River watershed, which includes all of Woodstock. This is the third year of a 5 year grant. They help farmers to implement practices that help with soil health, such as cover crops, crop rotation, no till, or reduced till. They offer technical assistance. They will come out to the farm, do an analysis, look at natural resource concerns and come up with a plan. This is a voluntary program, they are not a regulatory agency. There are some amazing practices going on, farmers are saving money on inputs, seeing increased yields, better erosion control, pest and weed control. There is funding available, up to 90% for new participants, although there is a cap. They will help with applications.

## Old business

- a. **WOLSLAFP report.** There are now 5 parcels in various stages of consideration.
- b. **P&Z subcommittee report.** There've been discussions on curb cuts, and maintenance and choice of vegetation along cul-de-sac roads.
- c. **Other.** A request for a \$500 budget for the next fiscal year was submitted to the Selectmen.

## 6. New business

a. The fall program will be about Agri-Tourism in the 21st Century. Denise Coffey wrote a good article in the January 18th Courant Community section: "Agri-Tourism Tops Agenda for Ag Commission". It's a hot topic. There's a lack of state statute on the subject, so local ordinance must fill in. P&Z should be involved. Joan Nichols is the favored speaker. Vermont is a leader in this area. It's an evolution from production agriculture, and includes such things as corn mazes, hay rides, Celebrate Ag, etc. Often aiming to get the consumer on site and make direct sales. CT's food safety rules will be kicking in in October and should be watched. September 27th is the proposed date, Stewart will check whether this fits Joan's schedule.

c. **Woodstock Land Map Grid Review.** Grid map 5668 covers the NE corner of town, bordering on Dudley and Thompson and including the N part of Converse Rd. There are only 6 parcels, all privately owned. 44 acres on the West side of Converse belong to the Meads, 39 acres on the East side belong to the Kallgrens, bordered on the south side by the Meadowside campgrounds. The other parcels, about 45 acres in total, belong to members of the Compagnone family. There are 2 homes and 88 acres in 490. The area includes woods, a few wetlands, and some hay fields.

**8. Adjourn.** Richard Norman **motioned** to adjourn at 2:30 pm, Paul Miller seconded, **all in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Hyde, Secretary

(These minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting of the full Commission.)