Woodstock Agricultural Commission

Regular Meeting, Town Hall, Room A, 1 pm, Monday, May 21, 2018

Members Present: Stewart Morse, Richard Norman, Rebecca Hyde, Paul Miller, Lynn Weaver, Jon Hermonot at 1:06.

Public Present: Grace Jacobsen, Frank Olah, Megan Hebert, Delia Fey at 1:10.

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

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

Review of April minutes: Richard Norman motioned to approve the March minutes as presented, Rebecca Hyde seconded, **all in favor.**

Public participation

Frank Olah is here on behalf of the Economic Development Commission. They're clarifying their mission, looking at a This is Woodstock! program, on the town green at some point, tourism angle. They meet the 1st Monday of the month at 7.

Megan Hebert, whose grandparents have Westview Farm in Woodstock, hopes to make artisan cheese. Starting in 5 years. Prospect and 197, PDR land.

Old business

     a. WOLSLAFP report. The town passed the proposal to purchase the development rights at Valley Farm.

     b. P&Z subcommittee report. At the meeting on the 3rd, Agritourism, or value-added activities, were discussed. Members were open to entertain these activities. They'll be following up on this in the future. Delia points out that special permits are costly, and run with the land, so it's good to make it simpler for AG activities. In the past, an equestrian academy had to jump through hoops, then things changed and another didn't have to. Big property surveys add up a lot when sometimes it's just a little piece being used.

     c. Other. None.

6. New business

    a. 2018 Program Agro-tourism in the 21st Century Input deadline is now: Paul mentions wedding and breweries and horse academies, which have been discussed as challenges. The taxation side is of concern, and knowing what's been done elsewhere, and how to address it simply. Do you have to be a certain size or local ownership? How to coordinate it with other town tourism activities? Like WalkTober. Terry Jones of Shelton CT would have some expertise. Delia suggests exploring if you can have mixed regulation, or a certain amount of space vs dollar sales counting as local? Might be simple to coordinate with CT grown. And how is anything to be enforced? Country Folk magazine had an article on this in the last issue. Could perhaps get someone from Vermont or another state, check who authored that article. Historical society is looking at self-guided tours, could add in farms. Recreation is organizing town opportunities, such as kayaking.

    c. Woodstock Land Map Grid Review. Grid map 5163. A handful of parcels on the Thompson border, East of Paine Hill Rd, Norman Hill Rd in the middle. Coman Pond to the east in Thompson, then slopes up a bit. Several are part of parcels that straddle the border. Peckham Brook is to the West. Pretty flat — 410 to 480 ft elevation. No wetlands. About 20 acres, 6 parcels, 11 acres open space. Fair amount of prime farmland. Owners include Comans, Normans, Loobys.

7. Announcements None. There were last minute state negotiations re community investment act and farmland funds, that money made it back in. Several CT dairy farms are closing, and cows are selling at a loss. Paul Salvas has sold 100 cows. Thats about half his herd. These operations can take a while life to develop. Globalization is keeping prices more level. 800M metric tons milk powder in storage, in EU. Dated. Don't want to dump it. Not much storage in this country. June 3rd is dairy day at the Yard Goats. Rebecca (Eddy) Murphy is heading that, she lives on Senexet Rd.

Angela Young told Stewart she'd come in and talk about what they're doing, and their timeline. Then we'll get Matt in for July. Emilie Hebert will be selling soft ice cream. Over in Kenyonville.

8. Adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Hyde, Secretary

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