

Agricultural Commission

Meeting Minutes for January 5, 2023

Wayne Mann, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Members present: Mark Stevens, Jill McCullough, Daimon Meeh, Ben Davis, and Wayne Mann. Guest: Josh Marshall. Wayne then asked Jill to act as recording secretary for this meeting and be responsible for taking the minutes. Jill agreed.

Chairman Mann introduced Josh Marshall and invited him to join the Commission, upon appointment by the Selectmen. Josh accepted the invitation, and the Commission members welcomed him. Chairman Mann then inquired if Daimon and Jill would be willing to serve another 3-year term, as their terms are set to expire. Both Daimon and Jill indicated that they would accept another term. Wayne thanked them for their continued service and indicated he would send a letter to the Selectboard requesting new appointments.

Commission members then reviewed a request from the Planning Board regarding input into the Town Master Plan on items pertaining to agriculture, specifically:

Should the present Agriculture-Conservation Zoning District be separated into two separate zones, an Agricultural Zone AND a Conservations Zone? Or should an Overlay District be used to create a special zoning for agriculture? After much discussion Commission members had many questions including:

-we would like to have a better understanding of what an overlay district can do. Does it only add restrictions or can it add exemptions from the restrictions of the underlying district?

-concern for what the separated agricultural and conservation zones would look like.

-agriculture is currently a permitted use allowed in all zones all over town, and members felt this should continue. Would that be allowed under the revised proposal?

-if agriculture is removed from a Agri-Conservation Zone, what changes or impacts will occur? What happens to any existing land that is in agriculture use, but will no longer be in an agricultural zone?

-Is forestry to be considered agriculture?

-what is the difference between the existing Natural Resource zone and conservation land?

-should we drop the conservation zone since conservation is more related to voluntary easements which could occur in any zone?

-could the "business incentive zone" model possibly work for incentivizing ag?

The Commission decided to request a meeting with the Planning Board to better understand the intent of splitting the existing agriculture/conservation zone into two separate zones. Wayne agreed to contact Greg Meeh and set up a meeting.

Old business—none
New business — none

Jill moved to adjourn, Mark seconded, meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted.

Jill McCullough

