

Brooklyn Agriculture Commission
Tuesday, March 27, 2012
7 pm
Brooklyn Town Office

Present: Chair Cherie Poirier, Joyce Meader, Stan Karro, Charles Langevin,

Minutes: February 27th minutes approved (CL, SK).

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Old Business:

a. Walktober:

J. Meader reported that Ann Ennis has offered to lead the tour of Kingswood Farm on Saturday, October 13 at 11:00 AM. The tour will start at 10:00 AM at Brooklyn Restoration on Gorman Rd, with the group crossing the Rzeznikiewicz farm's hayfields, observe the harvested corn fields, then visit the stored corn silage and haylage at Kingswood Farm as well as visit the animals fed by these crops.

b. Open Space Fund:

C. Poirier attempted to have the Board of Selectmen approve an increase in the Open Space Fund. The selectmen denied the increase due to the lack of activity. Cherie tried to explain to them the need to accumulate this fund over years in order to be ready when desirable land needs protection.

c. Community Farmland Preservation Program:

- a. J. Meader asked NRCS to provide a key to the map created of Brooklyn's Locally Important Farmland Soils. The map was recreated, showing that a majority of Brooklyn met this classification.
- b. C. Poirier spoke with the CT Dept of Agriculture about the program's protection priorities. The program will recognize cropland for animal feed as well as food production acreage.
- c. The pre-qualification application to the CT Dept of Ag requires the prioritizing of the town's parcels for protection. Food producing farms would be given higher priority. A discussion of prime and state important farmland soils as a means to designate priority followed. J. Meader will get a copy of the Conservation Commission's overlay of these soil types in the natural resource inventory map. This overlay could be included in the application.
- d. J. Meader will get labels printed and prepare a letter written to town farmers regarding this program which is appropriate for smaller farms than the former 30 acre minimum requirement for the state PDR program (purchase of development rights).
- e. The town Conservation Commission will be asked about co-signing such a letter to farmers.

- d. March 24th conference: First AGvocate "Growing Farms in Your Community" was sold out with 90 participants. Excellent speakers. Chair C. Poirier summarized Brooklyn's activities for the group.

New Business:

Farm to School: Healthy choices may be encouraged using local foods. The PTO may help with this initiative.

Windham County Food and Ag Committee is sponsoring a farmer tour of Allen Hill Tree Farm on Thursday, Oct 11, 2012. Biodiversity will be encouraged with the removal of white pine trees and invasive bittersweet and autumn olive, and the planting of Little Bluestem and other warm season grasses as well as wildflowers. A forest management plan by UConn Extension educator includes habitat improvement for cottontail rabbits.

Correspondance

- Jim Hunter is requesting a lease to use the protected open space at the Preserve on South Street to raise hay or corn silage. J. Meader moved to contact the selectmen with a recommendation by the Ag Commission that Jim be allowed to clear the field of autumn olive bushes, lime and fertilize. The first five years should be rent-free due to the expensive start-up costs.
- Sweet Peas is looking for local produce.
- Goodwin State Forest in Hampton is the site of an invasive plant control demonstration using a propane flame to remove Japanese Barberry. April 21.

Adjourned 9:00 PM

Sincerely,

Joyce E. Meader, Secretary