Brooklyn Agricultural Commission

Tuesday October 28, 2014

7.00 PM

Town Hall

Present: Lou Brodeur, Sandra Brodeur, Stanley Karro, and Charles Langevin.

Guests: Sally Timmons and Aaron Kerouack

S. Karro ***motioned*** to approve the August 26, 2014 meeting minutes as presented. S. Brodeur ***seconded. All in favor; motion carried.***

Public Participation: None

Old Business:

           Brooklyn Farmers Brochure: S. Timmons stated that there are not a lot of brochures left and the brochure needs to be updated. S. Brodeur noted that the businesses currently listed should be verified as still active; new businesses should be added. C. Langevin asked whether people find the brochures useful. S. Timmons said people like them. The Commission can keep the same artwork and simply update the content. S. Brodeur said that J. Meader will be helpful in updating the content. S. Timmons will check with AgVocate on the details of the original printer. C. Langevin ***motioned*** to revise and reprint the Brooklyn Famers Brochure subject to pricing. S. Brodeur ***seconded. All in favor; motion carried.***

Table cover with logo purchase: S. Timmons displayed the table cover. Everyone agreed it looks good.

           Committee report for “History of Agriculture in Brooklyn:” S. Karro stated that there is no new progress to report. This will be a project for the winter. He shared a copy of a book that the Finnish American Heritage Society has put together entitled “Our Stories, Our Places: Finnish Culture Heritage in CT.”

Back to school bar-b-que on September 4, 2014: S. Brodeur and S. Timmons found that it was difficult to get the children interested in the activity due to the proximity of the playground. The consensus is not to participate in the bar-b-que next year. Brooklyn Fair or Family Fun Day may be more suitable events to attend. S. Karros feels that food is a good way to attract interest. Perhaps The Farmer’s Cow would consider donating some ice cream to an event. S. Brodeur described the USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service’s educational program. This program travels the country in a trailer, educating children about food safety. S. Brodeur will inquire as to their availability for the Brooklyn Fair or Memorial Day.

            Mission statement: L. Brodeur handed out a list of eight possible activities that could form the basis for a discussion on what should be in the mission statement. S. Timmons feels it might be useful to list examples of each activity. S. Brodeur thinks something should be added about the Commission being charged with making sure local ordinances and zoning regulations are farmer-friendly. C. Langevin thinks the Commission should model its mission statement after those of the other Town boards and commissions. S. Karro suggested specifically mentioning the USDA and Extension Center in the mission statement. S. Timmmons noted that encouraging agriculture is only one way to conserve open space.

Other Old Business: S. Karro suggested running an ad in the Villager three or four times a year to highlight various farms. S. Brodeur noted that the Commission can always promote farms and events using the new website’s e-alert notification system. S. Timmons suggested that the Commission consider printing up and handing out at events little cards that explain how people can sign up for e-alert notifications.

New Business:

Discussion of need to address the height of farm structures as it relates to P&Z: L. Brodeur stated that Mr. Regis would like to rebuild his 42 foot high silo on the existing foundation. However, he has been told that the silo cannot exceed 35 feet. S. Brodeur questioned the intent of the 35 foot height restriction. C. Langevin suggested someone from the Commission have an informal conversation with Jana. Lou will undertake this conversation on behalf of the Commission. A. Kerouack suggested that the Commission may be interested in reviewing the rewritten regulations, in particular the regulations pertaining to the keeping of animals.

Topics and speakers for the 2015 program: L. Brodeur asked everyone to spend the next month coming up with ideas for topics and speakers for the 2015 program. S. Brodeur suggested holding tours of different farms. S. Timmons suggested a schedule of four events. It is important to decide who the audience will be: the general public or people seeking specific information to start their own farming activities. S. Brodeur thinks it is possible to target both groups. A variety of farming types was discussed: beekeeping, Christmas tree growing, hydroponics, and backyard chickens. S. Karro inquired whether there might be some way to coordinate these events with the Killingly High Agriculture School. S. Karro suggested a locally grown pot luck. S. Timmons noted that a similar event held in Bozrah was successful. C. Langevin is willing to host the event. September or October are the ideal months since local crops will be ready. S. Karro suggested that different events could be geared to different crowds. For example, one event could be targeted to the members of other boards and commissions.

Generate meeting dates for 2015 for publication: The consensus is to keep the meeting on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7 PM.

A. Kerouack voiced his concerns that historically significant resources are in danger of being lost. These include the grange, the pump house and 8 Wolf Den Road, adjacent to Town Hall.

  S. Timmons has researched the use of Facebook and Twitter by other towns. Killingly uses both; Canterbury did not want the burden of maintaining social media. No one was concerned about liability issues. S. Brodeur ***motioned*** to authorize S. Timmons to create and maintain an Agriculture Commission Facebook page. S. Karro ***seconded. All in favor; motion carried.***

C. Langevin ***motioned*** to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 pm. S. Karro ***seconded. All in favor; motion carried.***

Next meeting: November 25, 2014

Sincerely,

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Shelley Hopkins

Recording Secretary