

Brooklyn Agricultural Commission
Tuesday February 27, 2018
7:00 PM
Town Hall

MINUTES

I. Call to Order – Chairperson, Anne Ennis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call (5 Regular and 3 Alternates)

Anne Ennis, Chairperson; Charles Langevin, Vice Chairperson; Lou Brodeur; Sandra Brodeur.
J. Meader arrived at 7:04 p.m. S. Karro was absent with notice.

Also Present: Aaron Kerouac, Brooklyn Planning & Zoning Commission; Josh King.

III. Seat alternate if necessary – None.

IV. Review minutes from January 23, 2018 Meeting

Motion was made by L. Brodeur to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 23, 2018, as presented. Second by S. Brodeur. Motion carried unanimously (4-0-0).

V. Public Participation

Charles Langevin, spoke as a citizen, and thanked the Commission for the letter of support for adding a cider processing room to one of their barns., with special thanks to J. Meader for composing and circulating it and to A. Ennis for endorsing it.

A.Kerouac asked if there are any suggestions for the Zoning Map. Ninety percent of the Town is zoned RA (agriculture). He asked if there are any zoning issues (e.g. setbacks) that the Ag Commission would not want to see in another part of Town. He explained that the PZC will be talking about the RA taking back a lot of the R-30 because there are plots of R-30 around Town that make higher density, but have never been used for high density. Two that he knows of are: one is just forest; the other is all along the River. Because it is wetlands, you can't build too many houses, but you can farm. However, the R-30 puts more limits on the types of farming that can be done. So, he feels it should be changed back to RA.

J. Meader arrived at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Kerouac described the locations/areas that he was speaking of and expressed appreciation for the Ag Commission's support of that change when it comes up. He commented that it is difficult to explain the impact to the people until they feel it (e.g. if they want to have chickens ten years down later).

S. Brodeur asked if Mr. Kerouac had gotten the map that was discussed at the last meeting. He stated that he had and that it was helpful with the Conservation Commission.

A. Ennis stated that J. Meader would be seated as a Voting Member.

VI. Old Business:

A. **Committee report for: "History of Agriculture in Brooklyn."** – No Report.

B. South Brooklyn Solar project. Joyce sending letter siting council requesting that pollinator plantings be included in the project. Letter also being sent to Conservation Commission, Brooklyn PZC, Canterbury Selectmen, and Canterbury Ag Commission.

J. Meader reported that she has e-mailed the letter to the following: Connecticut Siting Council (New Britain); Brooklyn Conservation Commission Co-Chairs; Brooklyn PZC; Canterbury Selectmen; and Canterbury Ag Commission; but will send hard copies also. She will also send to the Conservation Consortium (Regional) from which, Steve Revitsky, spoke about the solar panels and ag soils conflict.

C. Nothing new on Killingly Advisory appointment. All Brooklyn Students that applied were accepted. We still have space for additional students that still want to apply.

L. Brodeur reported that they usually have 15-20 students on a waiting list, but this year there was a low turnout, so they accepted all that applied.

D. Suggestions for zoning map changes?

J. Meader commented that she studied the Map and the comments, but didn't feel that there was anything that would affect agriculture. Mr. Kerouac re-capped what he had said earlier as Ms. Meader had arrived late. Mr. Kerouac explained that, in speaking with Paul Archer and Norm Thibeault, with the setbacks you would need to have almost perfect soil to make something fit on 30,000 s.f. He stated that the risk of development is probably low, but there is still the potential as it sits now. He explained that someone could fill it in. Mr. Kerouac stated that if it is changed back to RA, it would reduce housing development (down zoning). Ms. Meader expressed that it looks like a good thing.

A. Kerouac explained that Austin Tanner of the PZC brought up that he would like the PZC to take another look at adaptive re-use of agricultural (farm) buildings (which only affects farms). He explained that this would open up the ability to convert structures into different things. Mr. Kerouac does not know what the goal would be to expanding it to other structures. Mr. Kerouac explained that he reached out to David Fuss regarding this, and he found out that when they first wrote adaptive re-use of agricultural buildings, it was a way to re-use the old chicken coops. There was discussion.

VII. New Business:

A. Any new business to come before this meeting.

J. Meader referred to the letter to the Department of Agriculture in support of the Allen Hill Farm expansion (dated February 2nd). She read the letter aloud. Mr. Langevin thanked Ms. Meader for her role in the letter as she was not present earlier.

There was discussion regarding the AGvocate Regional Meeting. Interested Members are invited to go. J. Meader will post the notice on the website.

There was discussion regarding the Farm Family Emergency Response Training program. S. Brodeur stated that it may still come to Connecticut through grant money. There was discussion regarding whether Josh King would be able to get credits toward his logging license.

Joyce Meader explained that a new law was passed which requires the DEEP Commissioner and the CSC to consider agricultural and environmental impacts of proposed energy projects (including solar) before allowing them to proceed. (PA 17-218, SS 1-4, effective July 1, 2017). There was discussion.

A. Kerouac discussed, "What's Our Identity" which is intended to stimulate the economy. He mentioned that the Ag Commission could draft a letter to let people know what the Town of Brooklyn is about (a rural farming community). The EDC's job is to educate people about the businesses that are here in Town. The EDC brought in NECCOG to talk about branding. There was discussion.

VIII. Action Items for Next Meeting – None.

IX. Adjourn (Next meeting March 27, 2018).

Motion was made by L. Brodeur to adjourn at 7:34 p.m. Second by C. Langevin. Motion carried unanimously (5-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault
Recording Secretary