

Brooklyn Agriculture Commission

Tuesday, July 26, 2016

7:00 PM

Town Hall

Present: Deb Tanner, Sandy Brodeur, Joyce Meader, Stan Karro, Charles Langevin, Sally Timmons. Lou Brodeur arrived late.

Guests: Anne Ennis, Josh King, Jeann Flannery, Robert Loughlin

7:10 PM Meeting called to order

Public Participation:

Joyce Meader introduced Jeann and Robert, owners of a 73 acre farm located at 510 Hartford Rd, Brooklyn, CT. Maps were distributed, followed by a request by Jean and Robert for support by the Agriculture Commission for their desire to sell the development rights to the town and state of Connecticut as part of the Community Farms Preservation Program.

Deb Tanner noted that the Ag Commission acts only in an advisory role.

Joyce Meader described the procedure for town approval if the state department of agriculture is interested in applying for federal funds to protect this land. The state offers a percent of the value if the town agrees to pay the rest of the easement value.

In order to use monies from the Brooklyn Land Acquisition Fund, the **Conservation Commission** and the **Planning and Zoning Commission** shall make advisory reports on the proposed agricultural conservation easement acquisition. The **Board of Selectman** and the **Board of Finance** must approve the funding and it must be voted on at a Town Meeting.

Dawn Pindell, FSA-USDA and Phil Chester, 1st Selectman of Lebanon, were two people to speak with, according to Farm Bureau's Joan Nichol, for additional insight into the process.

Joyce explained that the ag value is subtracted from the market value to determine the value of the easement or development rights. An appraisal by more than one firm may be necessary to determine the ag and market values. No offer has been made to Robert by a developer, so they do not have that benefit for increasing the priority compared to other properties being considered by the CT Department of AG that may be able to show a current need for protection.

Jean noted that they will attend the Conservation Commission meeting next week and are on the agenda. We thanked them for their time and they departed.

S. Karro motioned to approve the June 28th, 2016 meeting minutes as presented. J. Meader seconded. All in favor; motion carried.

Old Business:

History of Agriculture in Brooklyn Committee: Stan Karro shared excerpts from the Windham County Transcript that he read at the Killingly Historical Society:

- Mr. and Mrs. Archie Ennis moved to the creamery. 10/22/14
- Oliver Downs is digging a remarkable potato crop of over 3000 bushels. 10/14/14
- 'Best Corn' prize of \$5 was awarded to Mr. Hyde.

The Brooklyn Historical Museum has a new exhibit worth visiting, according to Stan Karro.

Exhibits:

An Unmanned display will be ready for the Brooklyn Fair and the Brooklyn Fall Festival, including:

- the three fold board with our accomplishments
- tripod with the best scenery from Brooklyn agriculture (no people)

Celebrating Ag at the Woodstock Fairgrounds would not have a Brooklyn Ag Commission display, but rather rely on the Advocate to put together a display that we could help man.

New Business:

Ag Forum: Deb Tanner suggested that we arrange a visit to CLICK commercial kitchen in Windham by the Brooklyn farmers. A discussion of Brooklyn issues could be held at that location's conference room. It was mentioned that other commercial kitchens are challenged with getting enough farmer participation. Stan Karro asked if there was interest in processing by Brooklyn growers to draw enough interest in this trip to Windham?

Maybe a slide presentation by CLICK at the next regional Ag Commission meeting would be appropriate and gain more of an audience. Sally will discuss at our next Advocate planning meeting.

Joyce Meader offered to write a letter to Robert Loughlin and Jeann Flannery regarding the Ag Commission's support for their proposal. Following a discussion about the wetlands deterring development naturally, the commission questioned whether there is a need to spend the town Open Space Fund on purchasing the development rights to the dry land blocked by the wetter soils.

Joyce Meader's idea to invite the town farmers to a cookout at Allen Hill Tree Farm as a social event was tabled after deciding that November was not a good time and a summer weekday evening next year would be more appropriate. The entire town would be invited as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Meader, acting secretary