

## **Agricultural Commission Minutes 12-22-15**

### **Town of Bolton Agricultural Commission**

#### **Meeting Minutes**

Date: December 22, 2015

#### **AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

[www.boltonag.com](http://www.boltonag.com)

63 Main Street

978 779-2297 or 779-3308

#### **Members:**

Eric Schartner 779-0212 [schartnerfarm@verizon.net](mailto:schartnerfarm@verizon.net) Term Exp 6/30/2013

Janet Johnson 779-2724 [janetmargjohnson@comcast.net](mailto:janetmargjohnson@comcast.net) Term Exp 6/30/2015

Teresa Sauer 634-1369 [arcemedes5@yahoo.com](mailto:arcemedes5@yahoo.com) Term exp 6/30/2016

Ada Woolston 779-5081 [gardenada@gmail.com](mailto:gardenada@gmail.com) Term exp 6/30/2018

Gentry Ferrell 634-2113 [gcferrell@gmail.com](mailto:gcferrell@gmail.com) Term exp 6/30/2018

A meeting of the Bolton Agricultural Commission was held on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 at Town Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:45. Commission members in attendance: Janet Johnson, Teresa Sauer, and Gentry Ferrell. Absent: Eric Schartner, Ada Woolston

#### **Reports from liaisons to Town Boards/Commissions**

- **Board of Health** No Report
- **Planning Board** (Schartner) No report
- **Board of Selectmen** (Johnson): No Report
- **Conservation Commission** (Pelletier): No Report
- **Conservation Trust** (No Report)

#### **Complaints/Requests for Site Visits**

- **Complaints/Requests for Site Visits:** None

#### **Appointments**

- None

#### **Agenda**

- Update of website. <http://www.boltonag.com/>
  - Discussion to be continued, agreed that there is a need to update the website.
  - Teresa offered to follow up on what is required for updating the website.
- Continue discussion of fencing/animals.
  - Discussed recently reported fencing issues in town of Bolton.
  - There is a known case of an escaped animal in Marlborough resulting in death of an

- individual.
  - Ag. Comm. seeks to engage as a resource for farmers and animal control officers to address fencing issues and prevent problems.
  - Members present discussed the need for communicating to residents who are new to owning livestock:
    1. Laws affecting owners of livestock
    2. Resources available for local farmers
    3. What to consider when acquiring livestock: space, shelter, feed, fencing, expenses and how to be a good neighbor
- Consider brochure or presentation on fencing.
  - Discussed brochure to facilitate healthy relationships between farmers and neighbors
  - "Good fences make good neighbors"
  - Pamphlet to include pro-active measures farmers can take to open the lines of communication with neighbors and available resources in the town for any questions, concerns or conflicts relating to farming.
- Connecting with MA Ag Comm and "Central MA Grown"
  - Jan to submit application to join the Massachusetts Association of Agricultural Commissions
- Date for next meeting.
  - Proposal to move meetings to Mondays at 6pm
  - Proposed dates for January meetings: Monday, Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>
- "Right to farm community" signs discussed, Jan to follow up on finding paperwork relating to the signs from FY14. Jan to follow up on availability of older signs featuring animal silhouettes.
- Discussion of avian flu deferred to Spring
- Proposed items for the next fiscal year:
  1. Brochure production costs
  2. Support of a get-together hosted by Ag. Comm. for Bolton farmers to network
  3. Web support related to updating the website
  4. Social media/marketing/communications related to events and information dissemination
  5. Tent at the Bolton Fair
  6. Update and reprint of old brochures/documents like the town farm list and Apples to Zinnia

#### **Events Discussed:**

- On Tuesday January 12, 2016 at 7pm the Jan and available Ag. Comm. members to attend Advisory Committee meeting to discuss FY17 budget.
- Jan has committed to finding available information about previous budgets

- FY13 and FY14 budget: \$1,746.00
- Jan to schedule talk on requirements of organic farming certification for local farmers
  - Jan committed to draft press release for talk
  - Working title "Organic certification: Is it worth it?"
  - Teresa has committed to lead on advertising once the talk is scheduled

**Proposed events:**

- Farmer get-together for local farmers to network and engage with the Ag. Comm.
- Carrie Chickering Sears of the Umass Extension at Amherst is willing to give a presentation on fencing

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00

**Action Item Summary:**

**Jan**

1. Follow up on finding paperwork relating to the signs from FY14
2. Follow up on availability of older signs featuring animal silhouettes
3. Submit application to join the Massachusetts Association of Agricultural Commissions
4. Schedule talk on requirements of organic farming certification for local farmers
5. Draft press release for talk
6. Find available information about previous budgets

**Teresa**

1. Follow up on what is required for updating the website
2. Lead on publicity for presentation on organic farming certification

**Gentry**

1. Submit meeting minutes
2. Volun-tell husband to assist with graphic/web design for pamphlet and website update

**All**

Agree to date for next meeting

- Proposal to move meetings to Mondays at 6pm
- Proposed dates for January meetings: Monday, Jan. 11<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup>