

Meeting Minutes
Canterbury Agriculture Commission
Thursday, February 25, 2017
Canterbury Community Center

I. Call to order:

- a. Chairperson Dawn Pindell called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM
- b. Recording device was unavailable to obtain audio transcript.

II. Roll call:

- a. Members present: Dawn Pindell, John Baldwin, Jessica Vincent, and Rob Tuttle. Chairperson identified that a quorum was present.
- b. Visitors present: None.

III. Review of minutes from previous meeting:

- a. Minutes of the last official meeting held (January 26, 2017) were previously promulgated by e-mail and reviewed by all. Motion by Rob to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Jessica. Motion passed unanimous, minutes placed on record.

IV. Opportunity for Public Comment:

- a. None present.

V. Old Business:

a.. Killingly High School VoAg (FFA Student Scholarship): Update unavailable, Christina Fensley not present. (Previous status: School program counselor suggested that rather than establishing a scholarship, Canterbury organize a fundraiser to provide travel expense assistance to FFA students who will be attending the annual national meeting. Topic was tabled for further discussion until next meeting, pending additional information.)

b. Farm & Crafts Community Market: Jessica reported on the vendor application form she drafted, and that the form will be mailed to prospective vendors the first week of March. Jessica provided a list of potential vendors from various farms and businesses, which was discussed and several additional names added. She reported that around the 1st of May a flyer will be mass-mailed to all Canterbury residential addresses informing them of the market. Additionally,

- Jessica drafted a sign-up sheet covering the calendar schedule for the market (week-by-week) for volunteers to commit to helping/assisting with set-up and supervision. She will promulgate this by e-mail.

- Jessica discussed possible fundraiser ideas, and suggested "Dunk The First Selectman" as one, during one of the early market dates (proceeds to go toward Killingly FFA.)

- Discussed setting up an Ag Commission booth at each weekly market (need the banner, folding table, pop-up tent, etc.)

- Jessica reported on status of funding (via state grant), and town is waiting for the state to forward a check that will be placed into town account. Also reported on local businesses and local organizations she had reached out to during the winter, to either sponsor or participate. Thus far, she has commitment from Westview Tractor, who has donated toward the market. Possible other organizations include Historical Society, Friends of Prudence Crandall, library, fire department.)

- Permanent sub-committee of the Ag Commission will next meet at 6 PM on March 9th (each 2nd and 4th Thursday's of each month (6:00 – 6:30 PM) between now and the first market opening date scheduled for May 23rd.

- Discussed placing notice of the market in the next edition of the Canterbury Newsletter (deadline to submit article early-May.)

- Additional discussion topics included Farm & Craft Market website/Facebook, utilizing students who attend the Killingly High School FFA Vo-Ag program, and tabling action on Federal USDA farmer's marketing grant application until next year after obtaining specific operational data from 2017.

c. Commission Membership: Jessica needs to be sworn-in as a regular member, for a full 3-year term beginning in March 2017 (She had only been sworn in previously as a temporary replacement for Alternate Member). The March 7th Selectmen's Meeting intends to approve commission appointments, so all changes and/or new requests for appointment must be submitted before that meeting. Discussion about needing to fill vacancies of current members whose terms expire on March 31, 2017 (Dawn, Kevin, and John.) Tim Tyler will continue as an alternate through March 2019. Christina (regular member) and Rob (alternate member) terms expire in 2019. Dawn needs response from Kevin if he will continue; John said he'd contact Kevin. Rob desires to be changed to 'regular member' and needs to submit letter of request to 1st Selectman.

d. Solar Panels: Discussion regarding siting of commercial solar generating facilities on prime Canterbury farming lands. Company (Ranger Solar) made a presentation to town residents on February 7th. Rob and Dawn provided insight from attending the meeting. Rob lives on Wauregan Road adjacent to the location of the proposed solar field. Ranger has approached him and other near-by residents to discuss impact. Rob reported that appraised property values are already being negatively affected. He reported that the presentation at the public meeting was professional, but few citizens attended and some questions were vaguely answered. Ranger will only be involved in organizing and submitting the application for this joint-venture to the state siting council; Ranger intends to sell (turn-over) the project to a separate corporation for actual construction and operation. Additionally,

- Dawn reported that Ranger says taxes will be paid to the town of Canterbury, approximating \$175,000 per year over 20 years. Life of project expected to be 30 years, with upgrades and panel replacements occurring throughout that timeframe. Question remains unanswered as to what state and/or federal financial subsidies may be supporting this project.

- The land (250 acres being utilized out of a 544-acre parcel) will be leased from the owner, the remainder being farm/forest PA-490 land. Discussed recent Hartford Courant article on the subject, advised everyone to read it. Tyler's Ledgebrook Diary Farm will ultimately lose about 140 acres of leased land they currently cultivate.

- Dawn presented letter she had drafted for submittal to town Selectmen. She shared the draft (requesting non-support) to commission members for review and inputs, with objective of submitting it within two weeks.

e. Walktober: Discussion about sponsoring October farm walk, possibly at the Vincent Farm. Jessica reported she and Matt were still discussing the topic. Deadline for submitting application to TLGV is April 1st.

VI. New Business:

a. None.

VII. Other

a. Dawn reported on several upcoming agricultural education opportunities, including one March 14th hosted by the Mansfield Ag Commission. She also discussed farmer one-on-one meetings across the state (various locations) sponsored by the UConn Cooperative Extension, that will occur 6 times over period Feb-April. Farmers will be able to schedule meetings with attorneys, credit sources, and financial consultants arranged by the CT Farm Bureau Association.

VIII. Next Meeting

a. Next official Canterbury Ag Commission meeting will be held March 23rd at 7 pm in the Community Center.

IX. Adjournment

a. Motion to adjourn by John, seconded by Rob. Meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.