
Agriculture Committee Regular Meeting

August 15, 2023, 12:00pm

MINUTES

Members Present: S. Stearns, M. Tindall, R. Fricano, A. Eitland

Members Absent: J. Emenheiser, E. Hall, L. Trovato, C. Keuffner, D. Dorfer, M. Desch

Guests Present: S. Stephenson

Staff Present: M. Stankov, Environmental Planner;
J. Kaufman, Director of Planning and Development/Senior Planner

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

- Stacey Stearns called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm. A. Eitland joined at 12:18.

2. Approval of Minutes

- MOVED by Fricano, second by Tindall to approve minutes of the May 23rd meeting as presented.
- No Discussion.
- Motion Passed Unanimously

3. Opportunity For Public Comment

- S. Stephenson spoke, noting her job as a Farm and Ranch manager for the region and mentioning her eagerness to meet the local agriculture community and serve on the committee when space opened.

4. New Business

- **Agriculture Committee Presentation to Town Council**
 - M Stankov went through outline of the presentation, explaining flow and asking for feedback.
 - Eitland noted that success stories of land leases should be highlighted to promote the idea of this practice.
 - M Tindall suggested that another highlight could note that many of these parcels are not used solely as Ag land, but as parks. Protecting the Ag land enhances the parks for hikers and outdoor activities. Torrey Preserve is one such example.
 - M Stankov noted he would send the powerpoint out to all committee members so that anyone could contribute as they developed ideas.
 - R Fricano volunteered to be at the meeting on 9/11/2023 to help present to the Town Council.

5. Old Business

- Communication and Events Initiative:
 - No business was discussed.
- Agricultural Lease RFP's

- No business was discussed.
- Taste of Mansfield Update
 - R. Fricano discussed the tour of the Spring Valley Student Farm and the summer Taste of Mansfield organizers event.
 - M. Stankov noted
- Sustainable CT
 - No business was discussed.
- Membership - Noted that S Stephenson and T Wollen would likely join our committee while Ed Hall and Joe Emenheiser leave in October.
- 20th Annual Celebrate Mansfield Festival
 - The event is scheduled Saturday September 30th from 2-8pm. We would like to set up a table to support local agriculture. In the past we have had pictures, a trifold display, and demonstrations. We will revisit the discussion July 11th at the next Committee meeting.
 - Stearns began brainstorming for this year's table. Eitland noted that having comparisons between local farm-raised foods and imported foods could be a good way to promote local agriculture. Stephenson noted Killingly VoAg festival had egg and fur comparisons for animals, which was popular with children. Tindall noted this could be a mystery box, enhancing the event, and could partner with other tables to reward kids who figure out the mystery item with tokens redeemable for small prizes.
 - Volunteers needed for the booth and for making ideas. Fricano volunteered to be there day of. Committee members noted they would continue brainstorming in the coming weeks.

6. Reports

- Tindall and Fricano noted their meeting with Arvind Shaw, owner of a parcel at the corner of Mt Hope Road that is under a conservation easement intended to promote agricultural use. Owner faced various difficulties in making land viable, but committee members noted that conversation was helpful. Staff noted continuing to work with the property owner on the challenges due to the conservation easement.

7. Communications

- S. Stearns noted that nothing had been heard from the CT Countryside initiative, and M. Stankov noted he would investigate why no communications about upcoming meetings had been received.

8. Future Meetings

- Discussion commenced about moving the meeting to a new time that was more conducive to staff schedule. It was resolved that future meetings would be scheduled on Thursdays at 5:30, as long as this could be confirmed as a workable time with those members who were not present.

9. Adjournment

- R. Fricano moved, M. Tindall seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.