

ENFIELD AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday December 14, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Enfield Agricultural Commission was called to order by Chair Karen LaPlante in the Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 @ 7:06 PM

ROLL CALL

Chair LaPlante took the roll.

Present - Chair LaPlante, Commissioner Cote, Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall, Commissioner Dynia, Commissioner McGuire, Commissioner Sacerdote and Commissioner Wyzga (7:09)

Also present: Georgie Driver - Staff and Karen Timpone – Recording secretary

Absent – Commissioner Vose and Commissioner Kober

Approval of Minutes - A motion to accept minutes of November 9, 2021 was made by Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall, seconded by Commissioner Dynia – No discussion – 4/0/2 – abstentions by Commissioner McGuire and Commissioner Sacerdote.

Public Participation – None.

Correspondence - Chair LaPlante reported that Maureen Mullen contacted her. The family has some farmland on Mullen Road which abuts the Land Trust property near the CREC School. On the reevaluation of the assessments by the Town this was previously appraised as woodland/farmland. The new assessor has gone through all the 490 properties and made changes. Georgie had some information on this – Not all 490s were taken off but if they are not producing a profit of \$2,100.00 they were taken off the 490 list. The only way they could have stayed on is if they are currently being farmed or if the lot is not buildable. In which case they would have to get a letter from Zoning stating why it is buildable. Georgie did go on site to see a few farm parcels. She did give the farmers some options/advice which is to appear before the EAC for public participation and talk about the grievances, continue to farm the lot, develop the lot, sell it, or lease it. Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall brought up the fact that now if they can develop on wetlands (with a permit) that can become an issue in itself. There is a possibility that owners who have not been in 490 for 10 years may have to pay back taxes. Georgie suggested the EAC draw up a letter to Town Council with their concerns and invite the new assessor to the next EAC meeting for a discussion on this matter. The farmers only have until February 18, 2022 to appeal the new assessment. Chair LaPlante asked the Commissioners to read the 490 book for the next meeting.

Review of Bylaws – Chair LaPlante did find the Bylaws for EAC. Georgie stated that the EAC can go through it and revise it. It will have to go to a public hearing. Georgie will take all the updates and put them in the current bylaws so all changes are shown. There was a discussion regarding who the EAC falls under it was the Town Manager however, the EAC will probably fall under Development Services. This will be discussed at the January meeting. Georgie will go through the current bylaws and make changes/suggestions for the next meeting.

Approval of Invoices or other financial matters: Georgie was able to find the EAC funds for Farmland Preservation – The total is \$51,895.00. It was hidden in a sinking fund account which was under the wrong name. In 2015, the town donated \$25,000 and in 2017 the town donated \$25,000 and then there

were donations for \$1895.00. Georgie stated that they can accept donations from local charities and can also fund raise. They will need to raise a lot of money for the program.

Unfinished Business:

POCD - A motion to table this until the January meeting was made by Commissioner McGuire and seconded by Commissioner Dynia – passed unanimously.

New Business:

Hiring an appraiser for Art Mullen's Farm/funding update – Georgie explained how the application process works. Until they can secure funding, they are in an eligibility/gray area. She met on site with the Department of Agriculture - Denise O'Meara who gets the application. She has to make sure that the land qualifies for the program and she was very pleased with this property. They have to now secure an appraiser. The EAC can use the monies to hire a private appraiser. Georgie is currently trying to secure a Land Trust fund. She has gotten anywhere from \$5,000 to \$25,000 from the Northern Land Trust depending on what the appraisal says. She is still waiting to hear from the Connecticut Land Trust. Trust for Public Land is another one suggested by Chair LaPlante to reach out to for some funding. Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall asked if the EAC can ask for \$50,000 from the town. They will try to find out if they can get it into the budget for next year.

The next meeting is January 11, 2022 -

Adjournment – A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Cote, seconded by Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall – passed unanimously

The meeting was adjourned @ 7:40 pm