

Agricultural Commission Minutes

January 13, 2020

Attending: Dan Mercurio, Sighle Philbin, Amy Malo, Molly McArthur

Absent: Jim Amaral, Kate Simmarano

Community members in attendance: Don Varney, Jason Kunst, Sun Isana

Move to open Sighle Philbin 2nd Dan Mercurio 6:30pm

1. Review minutes
 - a. Motion to accept Sighle Philbin, second Amy Malo
 - b. Passed, minutes accepted
2. Draft of regulations:
 - a. This will ultimately be a Board of Health (BOH) regulation; Agricultural Commission (AgCom) cannot make regulations
 - b. BOH has definitions of items that will be in the regulation, which must be included in the final regulation
 - c. BOH likes the suggestions on confinement and sanitary conditions.
 - d. Review of current procedure for resolution of complaint
 - i. Complaint is made, referred to BOH
 - ii. BOH sends offending party a certified letter
 - iii. If there is no response/resolution there may be an administrative hearing
 1. AgCom could start being a part of those hearings
 - iv. If no resolution, Alliance is contacted, sends inspector
 - v. Inspector contacts offending party, inspects as able; BOH members may accompany inspectors
 - vi. Attempts are made to mediate a solution both parties are happy with.
 - vii. Complaint is closed; complaint may be re-opened if conditions deteriorate again
 - e. Discussed possibility of “unfounded complaint” penalties (such as the town of Sterling has).
 - i. Such a regulation would have to be a town by-law, which is beyond the scope of the proposed BOH regulation
 - f. It was noted that Barn Books and Animal Census should be kept in town and reported to the state
 - i. These have not been consistently done due to logistics and personnel issues
 - ii. Proposed regulations could help address this issue
 1. All animal keepers will fill out a form with the number and type of animals they have for the previous calendar year
 2. When small parcel owners seek permits they could be required to sign acknowledgement form

3. Bob asked for some time to review other regulations; not sure regulations varying by parcel size will work, it might start getting into zoning issues
 - g. If animal removal is required the MSPCA can be contacted, the aim is to resolve issues without animal removal (for issues other than animal cruelty/neglect).
 - h. BOH will review and combine their proposal with our advice
 - i. There is special concern regarding vermin (rats) getting into feed stores
 - ii. May add minimal practices to regulation to disambiguate expectations for owners
 - iii. Next BOH meeting is 02/12/2020
3. Attendance/reservations for MAAC meeting on 02/22/20 (Saturday)
 - a. Held in Marlborough, at Holliday Inn
 - b. Unclear how to make a reservation
 - c. To be continued...
4. We will need to get signatures for a warrant item to get a small line item budget from the town
 - a. Need to specify what we want to spend it on
 - i. Replacing Right to Farm Town signs
 - ii. Hand-outs at town functions about AgCom issues
 - iii. Other activities we plan
 - b. Move to initiate \$750 line item in the town budget to promote AgCom related activities
 - i. proposed: Amy Malo, second Dan Mercurio
 - ii. Passed, will propose a \$750 line item in the town budget
5. Move to adjourn Sighle Philbin, second Dan Mercurio
 - a. Meeting adjourned 7:40pm