

NORTH HAMPTON AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES - 1/11/18 - FINAL

The meeting was opened at 7:02 p.m.

Present: Dieter Ebert (Chair), Cindy Jenkins, Hank Brandt, Joan Ganotis, Lisa Cote and Planning Board Chair Tim Harned

Absent: Bobbi Burns and Walter Nordstrom

Since Planning Board Chair Tim Harned was present to address Ag Comm members' concerns with changes and additions to the accessory structures ordinances for the 2018 Town Warrant, we addressed this agenda item first. Mr. Harned informed members that the first public hearing was held on January 2 and the second public hearing will be held on Tues., January 16. After giving a brief background of the reason for these changes and additions, Ag Comm members voiced their concerns and questions. Some of our questions/concerns were:

1. the seemingly arbitrary use of 720 square feet for non-agriculture accessory buildings and 2,000 sq. ft. for agriculture structures
2. which rules apply when a conservation easement specifically allows for a large accessory structure and the town zoning requires a conditional use permit? Tim Harned will check into this.
3. requirement for conditional use permit where the only recourse to denial is appeal to the superior court.
4. the vague/subjective wording of "shall not unreasonably adversely affect the public interests..."

Mr. Harned explained the difference between a variance (I don't want to follow the rules - ZBA makes a decision to adjust ordinances in this situation - if denied, can't re-apply unless significant change to application) and special exception (granted by ZBA - list of things such as home occupation, etc.) If a conditional use permit is denied, the only recourse is appeal to the superior court, which only rules on whether the planning board decision was legal. These tools allow the planning and/or zoning boards to get input from others/abutters which they might not have otherwise.

There was discussion of other possible solutions to limit the size of accessory buildings and to lessen the impact on abutters. Dieter, on behalf of the Ag Comm, had previously submitted a suggestion to tie in building size to distance from the property line - the larger the building, the further from the property line. Another suggestion was to tie in lot size to allowable accessory building size - the more acreage, the larger the building allowed. Other towns only allow coverage of 15% of the lot. It was discussed that there should be different rules for non-agricultural accessory buildings and agricultural buildings, which are typically larger barns and/or storage buildings for feed/livestock/equipment.

After a long discussion of this warrant article, Mr. Harned said he would recommend to the Planning Board that the warrant article numbers be reworked with lot size, lot coverage, set backs and building size and not be put on the 2018 ballot. The Ag Comm would like to work with the Planning Board in 2018 to develop a suitable ordinance that will address both types of accessory buildings requirements. Ag Comm members felt we had a productive meeting with Mr. Harned, and our concerns were heard and taken into account.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - December 18, 2017

Since the discussion of the accessory structure ordinances had already taken 2 hrs., Dieter suggested we approve the December minutes at our next meeting in February. All agreed.

TOWN ANNUAL REPORT

Cindy drafted a report for the 2017 town annual report. Joan added additional information on the barn survey progress to date. Members approved of the combined report, and Cindy will send it to the town for inclusion in the town annual report.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Adjourn at 9:40 p.m.

1st - H. Brandt

2nd - J. Ganotis

Motion passed unanimously

Submitted by J. Ganotis Next Meeting date not set, but our regularly scheduled meeting would be Monday, Feb.19, President's Day, a Federal holiday.