

Present: Audrey Prior (Chair), Joan Ganotis (Vice Chair), Dieter Ebert, Phil Thayer, Pollyanna Ford (alternate)

Absent: Hank Brandt, Cheryl Kasztejna (alternate)

1. Opened meeting at 7:06 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes:

Motion: To approve the minutes from 10/17/2022 as written.

1st: J. Ganotis

2nd: D. Ebert

Motion passed unanimously

3. Old Business

3a. Community Garden: A. Prior and P. Thayer gave a summary of what was discussed at the November 8, 2022 Conservation Commission meeting regarding the Community Garden. Conservation Commission members raised concerns regarding the possible use of pesticides at the garden, and the appearance of the existing garden area. Comments regarding the appearance of the plots were focused mostly on the overall “messy” appearance of the garden. Allyson Ryder also attended the Conservation Commission meeting and provided several concerns that the gardeners have, including: mowing, access to water spigots, mobility/accessibility issues due to the terrain, and ticks. A. Ryder also mentioned that there were five or six plots that had been abandoned. The Conservation Commission asked that the Agricultural Commission prepare plans for the expansion, including a map, to be discussed at a later meeting.

A. Ryder had been planning to attend the Agricultural Commission meeting, but was unable to. A. Prior will see if A. Ryder can attend the January meeting. After discussing the issues raised at the Conservation Commission meeting, members of the Agricultural Commission agreed that the expansion should be put on hold and the focus should be on addressing recurring issues, such as mowing. Mowing has been an issue for several years. A. Prior will contact the North Hampton Department of Public Works to see what the minimum aisle width between plots would need to be in order for the town to mow between the plots. Currently the gardeners are using a push mower between the plots. In order to widen the aisles, the Agricultural Commission would need to re-stake all of the plots to their proper measurements and most likely shift some of the plots in order to achieve appropriate aisle widths. Commission members agreed that a work day at the Community Garden should be scheduled to assess what can be done. This would most likely need to be in March, before garden sign ups occur.

A. Prior will let the Conservation Commission know that the expansion has been put on hold. Agricultural Commission members would like to find out whether the conservation easement on the property on which the garden is located would allow for a permanent perimeter fence to be constructed, either in place of or in addition to the current fences around the individual plots.

3b. Newsletter articles/“Interview with a Farmer” project: The Winter Newsletter is due on January 24, 2023. C. Kasztejna and P. Ford will work on the article and will aim to have a draft ready for review at the January meeting of the Agricultural Commission.

3c. Annual Report 2022: Agricultural Commission members reviewed the final draft of the annual report.

Motion: To approve the annual report submission as written. A. Prior will submit the report to the town.

1st: P. Thayer

2nd: J. Ganotis

Motion passed unanimously

4. New Business

4a. Planning Board proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance: The Planning Board is holding a public hearing on December 20, 2022 regarding two proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to be voted on at the 2023 Town Warrant. One of the amendments relates to agriculture. The proposed amendment would make setback requirements for agricultural accessory structures the same as those for accessory structures not related to agriculture.

5. Adjournment

Motion: Adjourn at 8:05 p.m.

1st: A. Prior

2nd: J. Ganotis

Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Audrey Prior. Next meeting: January 16, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.; North Hampton Town Clerk's Office