

**Present:** Audrey Prior (Chair), Joan Ganotis (Vice Chair), Dieter Ebert, Phil Thayer, Pollyanna Ford (member of the public), Cheryl Kasztejna (member of the public)

**Absent:** Hank Brandt

1. Opened meeting at 7:01 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes:

**Motion:** To approve the minutes from 7/18/2022 as written.

1<sup>st</sup>: D. Ebert

2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Ganotis

Motion passed unanimously

3. New Business

3a. Review of Planning Board case #22:17: The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to allow agricultural and animal husbandry activities on the property located at 108 Exeter Road. The North Hampton Planning Board has requested that the Agricultural Commission review the application and offer comments for the Planning Board to consider. The Agricultural Commission held a site walk at the property on Friday August 12th. J. Ganotis and A. Prior were in attendance. No minutes were kept for the site walk. Applicant Rowan Perkins walked the property with A. Prior and J. Ganotis and identified the locations of the facilities described in the application.

**In attendance for this case:** Rowan Perkins (applicant), Kimberly Perkins, Charles Gallant, and Lauren Johnson, all members of the public.

R. Perkins presented her application. She would like to operate a goat dairy on the property located at 108 Exeter Road, a 2.38 acre parcel in the R-2/Medium Density residential district. Currently R. Perkins has three wether goats and one wether sheep. For the goat dairy, she plans to have six does, starting with two does if her application is approved and adding the others over time. She would breed two does at a time, every other year, and breeding would be through artificial insemination, so no rams would be on the property. Goat kids would be on the property for periods of time, likely a few months, before being sold. Extended lactation would be used, which allows the does to be milked for two or more years without having to be bred every year. This is achieved largely through diet and supplementation. She is requesting a conditional use permit to allow 15 animals on the property in addition to her family's flock of 11 chickens. This total accounts for her current goats and sheep, six does, and two to four goat kids that will be on the property periodically, as well as one pig.

The goats will be housed in an existing barn with a fenced in exercise area. Electric fencing will be used to move the herd around the property for grazing. In the original application, the manure storage was located immediately next to the barn housing the does. Due to concerns from abutters, the manure storage location has been moved to the other side of the property, where it is currently located. R. Perkins plans to install a concrete pad for the manure to be stored on, and will be using a 3 bay system to compost the manure, along with a chicken tractor to help break the manure down more quickly. The application does identify a separate location for isolated manure storage for the manure from sick goats. This manure must be kept separate for a minimum of 120 days before it can be moved to the normal manure storage. R. Perkins said that she would likely isolate this manure for at least six months in the event she has a sick goat.

Abutter Charles Gallant (112 Exeter Road), shared his thoughts regarding the application. The Perkins family has had animals on their property for a number of years and C. Gallant said he has never experienced an issue with odor from

manure. He described how R. Perkins is very dedicated to her animals. C. Gallant is in favor of the application being approved.

Abutter Lauren Johnson (102 Exeter Road), shared her thoughts regarding the application. She and her husband Christopher had initially had reservations about the application as the manure storage was located close to their property and specifically to their house. She said that they are feeling better about the proposal now that the manure storage has been relocated, and they are more comfortable having heard R. Perkins' plan for how the goat dairy will progress, knowing that the number of animals will be growing slowly over time rather than 15 animals showing up on the property at once.

P. Ford asked R. Perkins if she had considered having the manure removed from the site, if it does become a problem. R. Perkins said she had looked into it and would consider it if the manure became an issue. P. Ford said that she has manure storage on her farm and R. Perkins could bring the manure there if she needed to.

P. Ford explained that goats do not need a lot of space, as they do not need the same amount of grazing land that other species require. Goats have been bred to be hay and/or grain fed, and so do not need large pastures. D. Ebert discussed that the four animal maximum for properties less than four (4) acres was written with large animals like horses and cows in mind. Large animals need quite a bit more space than smaller animals like goats or sheep. UNH Cooperate Extension's Suggested Space and Housing Guidelines provide 20-25 square feet of enclosed area per goat and 50 square feet of exercise yard space. The Agricultural Commission members felt that these guidelines had been followed in the preparation of the application.

Commission members are in agreement that this property can support the agricultural and animal husbandry activities described in the application.

**Motion:** To allow the chair to write a letter to the Planning Board summarizing the Agricultural Commission's discussion and stating the Agricultural Commission's support for the application.

1<sup>st</sup>: J. Ganotis

2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Thayer

Motion passed unanimously.

#### 4. Old Business

4a. Community Garden: A. Prior has not received word of any issues, so things seem to be going smoothly at the garden. P. Thayer said that Mark Lariviere, who mows the lower part of the Community Garden parcel for the Conservation Commission, does not do disking and harrowing. A. Prior will reach out to H. Brandt about an updated quote on disking and harrowing the field in preparation for expanding the garden.

4b. Goals for 2022: When J. Ganotis was putting up flyers for the Barn Talk she noticed that other libraries have a seed sharing program. She checked with North Hampton Public Library and was told that they do not have a program like this. If this is something that the Agricultural Commission would like to set up it would need to be discussed with Library Director Susan Grant and/or Assistant Director Liz Herold. It would then need to be presented to the Library Board of Trustees. These programs are usually active in the late summer and fall when people are harvesting seeds. The Agricultural Commission will consider this for next year.

4c. Barn Tour and Talk: The Barn Talk is Thursday, August 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm at the North Hampton Town Hall. After some back and forth, the Barn Talk will be broadcast on Channel 22. J. Ganotis has been working with the North Hampton Historical Society (NHHS) to post flyers around town and in local businesses, as well as publicize it online. J. Ganotis will be introducing Mr. Porter at the talk.

The NHHS Barn Tour will be Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, and the bus will depart at 10:00am from the North Hampton Town Offices. The cost is \$20 per person and no one under 12 will be permitted on the tour. Sign ups are available at the North Hampton Public Library. There is a limit of 30 people. This event is administered by the NHHS with the Agricultural Commission providing three private barns and arranging for the speaker, Mr. John Porter. All monies and sign ups are handled by NHHS.

4d. Newsletter articles/"Interview with a Farmer" project: C. Kasztejna is going to work with P. Ford on an article for the Fall Community Newsletter, which is usually due towards the end of September. Another idea that was suggested was to do an article about prepping gardens for winter.

4e. Membership: C. Kasztejna's appointment should be discussed at the next Select Board meeting, which is next week. There is still one open alternate position, and a request for volunteers has been posted in the North Hampton Friday Folder. A. Prior has not heard of any inquiries yet.

#### 5. Adjournment

**Motion:** Adjourn at 9:02 p.m.

1<sup>st</sup>: J. Ganotis

2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Ebert

Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Audrey Prior. Next Meeting date & time: September 19, 2022; 7:00 p.m.; North Hampton Town Clerk's Office