

Town of Lincoln
Minutes of the Agricultural Commission Meeting
Held on Wednesday, February 24, 2010
In the Mass Audubon/Drumlin Farm Director's Office

Members present: Christy Foote-Smith, Kip Kumler, Jay Harrison, Nancy Bergen, Lynne Bower, Kit Carmody, Peggy Marsh, Ellen Raja

Members absent: Ari Kurtz, Beth Taylor, Jen James

Non-members: Ray Tomlinson, Karen Seo

Meeting commenced at 7:53

Commission members discussed whether it was appropriate and desirable to have someone who is not on the commission take meeting minutes. (This discussion was motivated by Karen Seo's offering to take minutes.) It was observed that it is customary for members of a commission take the minutes for their meetings; the town does not provide someone to fill this role; Lynne has been doing a great job of taking minutes; it's hard to participate and take notes; and there needs to be consistency in how the notes are done. The conclusion was that it made sense to take advantage of Karen's offer and see how it works out. The members will have the opportunity to review and amend the minutes before they are posted to the town web site.

Review of minutes from 1/22/2010 meeting – There was some discussion of the content, a couple of minor typo-level corrections.

****Commission Decision** – The Commission voted to approve the 1/22/2010 minutes subject to minor typo corrections (unanimously).

****Action item** – Christy to distribute copies of Annual Report to the Commission members.

****Action item** -- Christy to send email addresses for Jen James and Beth Taylor's to Lynne

Zoning Change – preparation for Town Meeting vote

Lynne reported on how things went at the Planning Board meeting on 1/26/2010 – The attending Agricultural Commission members' presentation focused on only the amended 5.1 bylaw text. The Planning Board accepted the text and appeared pleased with it. The Board is going to have a public hearing on 3/9/2010 re: their sponsoring this change. Some representation from the Agricultural Commission will need to be there.

The Planning Board was told that the Ag Commission is going to work on "right to farm" bylaws. They were asked to let the Agricultural Commission know of any situations where there were agricultural issues.

The Commission discussed the need to find a way to reach a balance between residential and agricultural needs, e.g., by reminding people of the historical role that agriculture has played and by advocating for the general agricultural point of view not for a specific person. There was agreement that representatives of the Commission should attend Planning Board meetings whenever there's an agricultural issue. This will allow the Commission to hear what peoples' concerns are. Also, the Commission can offer its services in providing input

on agricultural issues. The Commission needs to be in contact with the community and to encourage inclusive attitudes toward agriculture.

**** Action item** – In the near term, Lynne will call the Planning Board twice a month to determine if there are any agricultural issues on Board's agenda for upcoming meetings.

**** Action item** -- Christy will send a letter to Planning Board offering Agricultural Commission help on agricultural issues.

**** Action item** -- Christy to ask Ari to attend the 3/9/2010 Planning Board meeting and 3/27 town meeting.

Update on South Lincoln Farms project (purchase of the MacDowell property to keep it in agricultural use)

– Mass Audubon has been a primary mover on the private raising of funding for this purchase. 56 acres of Audubon land will be put under APR to help raise funds. There is also a public raising of funds that is doing very well. It will require 2/3rds vote at Town Meeting and majority vote at town polls to raise key parts of the funding needed for this purchase to go through. There was a Globe article on 1/24 featuring an interview of Ellen Raja and there's a video.

**** Action item:** Lynne to ask Chuck Miller if there's some way to put a link on the town web site to the Boston Globe video and article on the South Lincoln Farms project.

Right-to-Farm bylaw – The Commission discussed how the strategy and timeline for pursuing this. Kip said he'd spoke to Brad Mitchell (Mass Farm Bureau) who has lots of information on how other towns have handled this. He's willing to come in to talk with the Commission about the issues that have arisen before and after such a bylaw has passed in other towns.

**** Action item** -- Kip to invite Brad Mitchell to next Commission meeting (3/10/2010).

Policy on GMO (genetically modified organism) crops – Lincoln Conservation Commission has voted NOT to allow GMO crops to be planted on any of their land. The Agricultural Commission agreed that they would like to hear Ari's assessment of this topic and the rationale for the Conservation Commission's decision.

Reappointments to Lincoln Agricultural Commission (LAC) – Nancy, Beth, Ellen, and Jay are up for re-appointment. Nancy, Beth, and Ellen said yes to reappointment. Jay is going to be director of the North Shore Food Project site. So he will be leaving the LAC. He hopes to find a new representative to the LAC from the Food Project.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.