

Woodstock Agricultural Commission

Regular Meeting, Town Hall, Room A, 1 pm, Monday, Aug 21, 2017

Members Present: Stewart Morse, Richard Norman, Paul Miller, Linda Auger, Rebecca Hyde.

Members Absent: Douglas Young, Lynn Weaver, Jon Hermonot.

Public Present: Frank Olah, Grace Jacobsen, Wayne and Dottie Durst.

Call to order: Chairman Morse called the meeting to order at 1 pm. Richard Norman **moved** to seat Linda Auger and Paul Miller as full members, Rebecca Hyde seconded. **All in favor.**

Review of July minutes: Linda **motioned to approve** the July minutes as presented, Paul seconded, **all in favor.**

Public participation:

Frank Olah, noted minutes after March need to get up on website.

Grace Jacobsen, member of the Conservation Commission, update on Quarry Road Forest Management Project. Bids for logging are moving forward. Haven't gone to Selectmen or Town Meeting yet. Marking is done, first logger has looked.

Dorothy Durst, member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, reported on the August 3rd Community Conversation about Open Space. Good conversation, the regulations subcommittee will be following up on ideas and coming up with better ways of portioning space in sub-divisions. Overview: panel discussion some months back, learned that the Ag community is better off if there is more than one option to give a developer. The decision becomes market based, the market has more choice. CT Statutes: open space is not mandated. Open space in a cluster sub-division is mandated by the state at 33%, Woodstock is at 50%. Example of another option: 20%, along the frontage, which addresses scenic issues. Currently: contiguous to the lots and a wrap-around. Purpose of review is to improve value for borrowers using their land as collateral, and make the process more market-based.

Old business

WOLSLAFP report. None.

P&Z subcommittee report. Turnout at the open space forum was good and there were good comments from the general public. Next mtg is Sept 7th. 7:30pm. Paul Miller commented that when reviewing buffers in a sub-division: make sure that wells and septic systems do not infringe on the rights of abutting properties. He's been stopped from spreading manure at times because of wells too close to a boundary. Health department looks at the distance to the nearest well, regardless of a boundary line. Can effect the siting of septic systems, too.

New business

Sept 490 program. Stewart wants to start distributing flyers, will catch up with Joan Nichols, and wants assistance to contact surrounding towns and commissions. Conservation and agricultural commissions. Rebecca will gather those contacts for everyone in NECCOG. Radio announcement on Sept 15th at 7 am. Villager events listing will be submitted this week. Stewart commented that the CT DoAg has a nice flyer about 490, 1 page, outlining the program. Good resource.

WDSTK land map. This month we're reviewing the area covered by assessor's map number 5282, having looked at 5280 last month. Rebecca noted that one can zoom in on any area in Woodstock by going to <http://neccog.org/gis/> where you can find owners, abutters, satellite view, wetlands, prime farmland, and various other overlays. Between 5280, 5282 and 5284, the Town of Southbridge owns 451 acres in Woodstock. Matt Desjardin, Deputy Director of Public Works, stated that the land is managed by WhiteWater, the company that manages the Southbridge water system. He was unaware of any Forest Management Plan. Southbridge has an Agricultural Commission and Stewart is interested in contacting or visiting them. Another parcel in 5282 is owned by the New England Forestry Foundation of Littleton, MA. Chris Pryor, their Director of Forest Stewardship, manages it. Rebecca put a call in and will report back when he gets in touch. 3 more lots are in 5282: another open space parcel, 26.5 acres, owned by Margaret Durkin of Canton, and 2 house lots. Next month we will look at 5284, which covers the northern border around Brickyard and Lebanon Hill Rds.

Celebrating Ag Sept 23, 2017. In the past, we've had a table with a farm map and other info' on Ag in Woodstock. It was agreed this year we will have a backboard with a few questions related to 490: What is PA 490? How much property tax can I save? What happens if I sell my land in 490? This will be used to promote the Sept meeting about 490.

Other

Next meeting is on Sept 18th.

Woodstock Grown brochure — need to restock and get them out there. Previously everybody listed in it got some, libraries, post offices, restaurants, farmers markets, Celebrating Ag, places in surrounding towns, too. Paul Miller gives a lot of tours, including group tours, and hands out various flyers as part of that.

Daphne the Cow, a mechanical cow, will be at Celebrating Ag, you can milk her. New event at Celebrating Ag. From the milk promotion folks.

NOFA Summer Conference, Aug 11-13. Rebecca attended. Over a hundred workshops, lots of participants, good information.

Adjourn. Linda **motioned** to adjourn at 2 pm, Paul seconded, **all in favor**.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Hyde, Secretary

These minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting of the full Commission.