

11-17-15 Agricultural Commission Meeting

Beth manning, chair

Barbara parry

Carolyn Wheeler, treas.

Ernest Kelley, guest

Jay (John) Herron

David Schochet, open space, guest

Prudence Wholey, sec.

John Wheeler, planning board, guest

Meeting called to order at 7 PM, Shelburne Center fire station.

The minutes of the Aug. 19th meeting were read and approved as amended.

David Schochet from Open Space Committee was at the meeting to speak to concerns (voiced by Norman Davenport) about the demise of dairy farming in Shelburne and the hill towns in general. He was wondering if some kind of open forum with CISA, local Ag. Commissions, and interested people might help to brainstorm some solutions to the issue. Some of the board members felt that small farms need to find a niche market, to diversify, and make other adjustments in these changing times. Big agribusiness does make it difficult to make a living on a small farm. Some successful hill town farms were noted, such as Side Hill Farm, Wheel-View Farm, and Apex Orchard. Educating the nonfarm public is all well and good, but farmers need to market their products.

Barbara Parry mentioned a collaborative whereby farmers could get together and market their products. Something like this would take a fair amount of organization, but it could help smaller producers get their wares out to the public.

John Wheeler was at the meeting representing the Planning Board. He said they are working on an updated development bylaw for the town which involves cluster development, where more open land will remain in use for agriculture. The planning board wants to update the bylaws, because something like cluster development is more attractive than the standard development which is now in place. The town does have the option to make development more restrictive. This has to go before town meeting.

Beth spoke to the pipeline issue. Some towns are getting together to form a municipal coalition against the pipeline (Kinder Morgan). She feels Shelburne should join it. Shelburne select board did come out against the pipeline earlier in the fall. Jay Herron mentioned that an easement is not delegable, so the pipeline people cannot just go on landowner's property without permission.

Ernest Kelley has decided to join the agricultural Commission. He will have to see a member of the select board, and get sworn in.

We discussed briefly a future program for a harvest dinner. Carolyn wants to get more photos of farms now to see how they have changed.

The next meeting will be on December 15th. at 7 PM at the Shelburne Center fire station.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 Pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Prudence Wholey