

AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HAPPY ACRES FARMS

Wednesday, December 18, 2013, 7:00 PM, Mallory Town Hall Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes**FINAL****Members Present:** J. Freed, L. LaVia, J. Molito, N. Volkmar, E. Smolen, J. Lesynski, C. Shulman,**Public and Invited:** C. Cope (ex officio), B. Ostrosky, G. Linkletter, Atty. J. Spannhake, & T. Piel**Call to Order:**Acting Chair, J. Freed Called the Meeting to Order at 7:02 p.m.**Approval of Minutes of December 2, 2013:**N. Volkmar Moved to Approve the Minutes of December 2, 2013 as written.Seconded by: J. Molito Vote: For: Unanimous**Committee Membership :**

Following an email poll, below are Members who agreed to the following expectations:

- * Participate in the twice-monthly scheduled live meetings
- * Lead or participate in sub-Committee meetings
- * Contribute time and expertise in out-of-session work streams which may include farm audits within CT and NY, and attendance at Board of Selectmen meetings.
- * Participate in supplementary email discussions
- * Review minutes emailed post-meeting for accuracy prior to meetings
- * Review documents posted to the cloud (and on file at town hall) prior to meetings

List of Respondents (13):

Neil Volkmar	Joanna Wosniak
Paul Kuhn	Jeff Lesynski
Warren Pitcher	Bob Ostrosky
Liz LaVia	Jerrold Siegel
Rich Lenihan	Jen Freed
Elyse Smolen	Justin Molito
Colette Shulman (with stipulations)	

Status Reports from First Selectman:

First Selectman Cope spoke in response to the farms' finances, stating he is hopeful to finalize details with the current Farm Manager this coming week. Cope requested a job description from the Farm Manager to get a better understanding of the revenues in and out as well as clarification of duties. Cope agreed to send the job description to this Committee. Cope stated it is too soon to discuss the revenues without a clear picture of what the short term plan entails. There was no new financial information to report. Cope discussed the up-coming transfer of ownership from the Trust. The Trust is willing to delay the transfer until February, to allow more preparation and planning for a smooth transition. Treasurer E. Holub spoke to the details of revenue, stating without a cash flow analysis and a clear understanding of the interpretation of the Trust and what is stipulated there isn't a clear picture of what can be done or can't. Cope stated he will reach out to Probate and Town Attys. for information. The Committee discussed the cell tower revenues and how the funding could be used. Holub stated the cell revenue is not part of the trust. The Town would have to vote to approve appropriation of all funding over \$ 25,000.00.

Survey -

The Committee discussed developing a process of presenting information for public input. It was unclear who would present the information, BoS or Committee. Some felt a survey would be helpful sooner rather than later to get a feel what the people of the Town prefer. Others felt it may be too soon to conduct any surveys and it might just confuse matters. Discussion followed regarding an online survey vs. old fashion suggestion boxes.

Timing for RFP-

The Committee discussed implementing the RFP sooner to get a sense of what can be done on the property. Discussion followed weighing the pros and cons if an RFP process begins early. Discussion followed in regard to use of an online site where independent farmers can find land for such purposes. First Selectman Cope stated a soil analysis survey would help determine what the land will sustain. Cope suggested conducting the analysis before the RFP.

Subcommittees-

501c3 development

Atty. Jamie Spannhake spoke in reference to forming a 501-c-3 corporation for the farm, stating taking this path restricts the type of non-taxable activities the farm could conduct to charitable, educational, and religious. Other activities could occur but would not be tax exempt. Another option would be to form a Non-Stock Corporation which is not tax exempt. Either way the application process can take up to nine months to be approved and filed. An entity can act as a foundation until they are approved by the State. First Selectman Cope suggested the Committee included the Town Atty. in discussions. An additional option would be to set up an enterprise fund, which is also not tax deductible. But, like the Library, an enterprise company can set a "friends of..." group to raise funds. Bob Ostrosky, and J. Molito expressed interest in joining the subcommittee.

Grants

L.LaVia expressed interest in the subcommittee, will reach out to J. Wozniak to see if she is interested.

Request for Proposal development

J. Molito, C. Shulman and B. Ostrosky expressed interested.

Nominating Committee –

N. Volkmar agreed to head the subcommittee and will reach out to R. Lenihan to see if he would be interested.

Interim Farm Operations – Tabled

Items for agenda of next (January 6, 2013) meeting

Approval of Minutes of December 18, 2013

BoS Report

Sub- Committee Reports

501c3 development

Grants

Request for Proposal development

Nominating Committee

New Business:

Develop a Happy Acres Farm Operating Budget FY 2014

Financials

Restricted Account

Purpose of giving back to the Town

Farm's Future / Intent

Old Business:

First Selectman's Report:

Residential Lease negotiations – term, cost, responsibilities, security deposit

Farmer contract negotiation status – term, fees (hourly or fixed?), scope of work

Farm operations – interim (ref: subcommittee suggestion below)

Interim Farm Operations

9. Adjournment:

N. Volkmar Moved to Adjourn the Meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Seconded by: J. Freed Vote: For: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted:



Christine Branson
December 24, 2013