

**AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HAPPY ACRES FARMS**

Wednesday, January 15, 2014, 7:00 PM, Mallory Town Hall Meeting Room

Meeting MinutesFINAL

**Members Present:** J. Freed, J. Wozniak, L. LaVia, J. Molito, N. Volkmar, E. Smolen, J. Lesynski, C. Shulman, W. Pitcher, and J. Siegel

**Public and Invited:** C. Cope (ex officio), B. Ostrosky, J. Keneeley, M. Josephson, M. Bristol, A. Price and E. Burnett (Citizen News)

**Call to Order:**

Acting Chair, J. Freed Called the Meeting to Order at 7:02 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes of December 18, 2013:**

N. Volkmar Moved to Approve the Minutes of December 18, 2013 with amendments to the spelling of C. Shulman's name and correction to the Motion to Adjourn, Seconded by J. Freed (J. Wozniak was not present).

Seconded by: R. Lenihan Vote: For: Unanimous

**New Business****First Selectman Status Report:**

Email correspondence from First Selectman C. Cope was read into record explaining he would not be in attendance for the Meeting, but has asked Town of Sherman, Business Administrator, Liz LaVia to speak to a few of the items on the Agenda. L. LaVia referred to Section 3, items a & e: Mrs. LaVia stated there was no approved Budget for the current FY 2013-14 for the Happy Acres Farm Ad Hoc Committee, since the passing of owner Tony Hapanowich, the Town has captured expenses. To date there are miscellaneous expenditures such as; legal fees, maintenance costs, road signs, the clerk has run approximately \$ 250.00 per meeting. To date HAF has captured \$2,817.50 in expenditures. The Town is trying to be very conservative until the close of this fiscal year. The First Selectman has made the recommendation to reduce the frequency of this Committee's meetings to once a month. Going into budget year 2014-15, the Town will budget for this Commission's clerk and associated costs.

**Farm Operations Discussion:**

Chair, J. Freed stated currently, this Committee's charge is to make recommendations to the BoS in reference to the short term/ long term operations of the farm. Discussion continued regarding the purpose of this committee and its' direction moving to long term. Since the short term plan of operations has not been determined to date it is difficult to make any recommendations. Many members stated they wanted to hear feedback from the taxpayers before making any recommendation. Concerns: day to day operating costs of the farm and how will that affect the taxes? This discussion was tabled until more information was available.

J. Freed Moved to make no Committee recommendation to the BoS in reference to the operations of Happy Acres Farm at this time.

Seconded by: P. Kuhn Vote: For: Unanimous

**Old Business****Sub-Committees****Request for Proposals- P. Kuhn**

Sub-Committee Chair, P. Kuhn reported progress of a sub-committee meeting held on January 6th at 6:00 p.m., the Minutes of this meeting are attached herewith and referred to as "Exhibit I". The

below items were discussed. There were questions as to the clarification of the Trust and what farm responsibilities would be covered by the revenue from the cell tower.

**Option A:** allow status quo until April 2015, allowing the cattle to complete their cycle and continue with the farm manager currently in place.

**Option B:** advertize immediately and with a goal to get a tenant farmer in place by summer 2014.

**Option C:** winding down operations by summer 2014 and place in holding with minimal operation advertize and with a goal to get a tenant farmer.

#### **Outreach- J. Molito**

Sub-Committee Chair, J. Molito discussed an outline that was sent to the Committee, also attached and referred to as "Exhibit II". Process suggestions and Focus of outreach: Present to the Town a series of small discussion meetings. Invite speakers from area farms to discuss ideas. Listen to the Town and learn what the people of the town would like to see happening at the farm. Discussion followed regarding the need and means to present ideas to the Town and get input. J. Molito requested Committee participation in putting together a presentation to bring to the Town.

#### **Nominating- N. Volkmar**

Sub-Committee Chair, N. Volkmar discussed nominations from the Committee to fill the officer's positions within the Ad Hoc Committee. Nominations were: Chairman- Jen Freed, Vice Chairman- Neil Volkmar, Secretary is still open.

**N. Volkmar Moved** to Nominate J. Freed as Chair of the Happy Acres Farm Ad Hoc Advisory Committee.

**Seconded by:** R. Lenihan **Vote: For: Unanimous**

**R. Lenihan Moved** to Nominate **N. Volkmar** as Vice-Chair of the Happy Acres Farm Ad Hoc Advisory Committee.

**Seconded by:** J. Freed **Vote: For: Unanimous**

#### **FY 2014-2015 Budget Request:**

Chair, J. Freed discussed budget needs of this commission. The items within FY 2014-2015 HAF Committee Budget will need to reflect: Clerk for one meeting a month at \$3,000.00 (\$ 250.00 x 12), and \$750.00 advertizing & newspaper warnings, postage, printing costs, website fees and \$ 125.00 training fees. The discussion was tabled to the next Meeting.

#### **Revision of Meeting Dates 2014**

**P. Kuhn Moved** to reduce the amount of Regular Meetings of the Committee to only the third Wednesday of each month.

**Seconded by:** J. Freed **Vote: For: Unanimous**

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**February 20, 2014 will be the next Regular Meeting.**

#### **Public Comment:**

Ellen Burnett has offered space in the Citizen News where members of this Committee could write editorials/ letters/ opinions. Discussion followed regarding would this be constructed as a group or as individual opinions. Mrs. Burnett suggested the space be used to conduct surveys or to educate the public on ideas for the farm. Selectman B. Ostrosky suggested use of caution when representing the "voice of the Committee".

9. Adjournment:

J. Freed Moved to Adjourn the Meeting at 8:55 p.m.  
Seconded by: C. Shulman Vote: For: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted:



Christine Branson

January 22, 2014