

AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HAPPY ACRES FARMS

Wednesday, February 19, 2014, 7:00 PM, Mallory Town Hall Meeting Room

Meeting MinutesFINAL

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

Public and Invited: B. Ostrosky, Allan Beatty, and Kevin Clark

Call to Order:

Acting Chair, J. Freed Called the Meeting to Order at 7:03 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of January 15, 2014:

N. Volkmar Moved to Approve the Minutes of January 15, 2014 with amendments to page 1, paragraph 1, "...since the passing of Tony Hapanowich, the Town has...change "running tab" to captured expenses. Last sentence, same paragraph change "budget year from 2013-15 to 2014-15. And amendment to page 2, Clerk fees: from "\$1750.00" to \$3000.00 (\$250.00x12)

Seconded by: P. Kuhn Vote: For: Unanimous

BoS- Update

Selectman, Bob Ostrosky was present and reported no changes. He stated both the Deed and Will are Public Record. Additionally, he stated the Trust documents indicate restrictions for the use of the land. The Committee discussed the restrictions of the funding received from cell tower revenues.

Committee Mission

Chair, Freed spoke in reference to the role of the Committee and assuring each member is given an opportunity to speak and feel their role within the Committee is valued. Discussion followed in reference to the original mission statement. While some members felt the Committee had moved to a different role, others disagreed and felt the mission was still valid. Many felt without a clear direction, there was no way to grow as a group. There were varying opinions in respect to the direction the Committee would take once the BoS makes a clear statement of their intentions with the current farm manager. Many were in agreement the functioning of the Committee was not optimal. Discussion followed in reference to the work that has gone into the sub-committees, specifically the RFP and Outreach Committees. P. Kuhn stated their Committee has worked hard to start a RFP and it does not make sense for the BoS to involve an Attorney that may not have experience with farming to create a Request for Proposal. The group agreed there were many diverse opinions within the group as well as within the Town. There were still many unknown aspects to the operations, costs, and restrictions of the farm. The Committee discussed the need of the input of the citizens of the Town through a Town vote or other forum would be a valuable factor in determining the future of the farm. Chair, Freed suggested presenting the RFP portion of the Agenda for this meeting to the BoS next week for discussion. Selectman B. Ostrosky suggested the Chair present these thoughts at the BoS Meeting next week.

Following a debate regarding the future RFP process, J. Molito made a suggestion to make a formal recommendation to the BoS requesting the input of the HAFC when drawing up an RFP. Vice Chair Volkmar suggested drafting a formal letter to be read into record at the BoS meeting next week. Chair Freed agreed to read the letter into record.

J. Molito Moved to formally recommend the Board of Selectmen seek the consultation of the Happy Acres Farm Ad Hoc Advisory Committee when drawing up a Request for Proposal.

Seconded by: J. Siegel Vote: For: Unanimous

Sub-Committee Reports

Outreach -

J. Molito and E. Smolen presented a quick overview regarding the past few sub- committee meetings. E. Smolen stated L. LaVia had attended one of the meetings and has offered access to information she had put together regarding the history of the farm. Additionally, Mrs. LaVia has audio tapes of Tony Hapanowich speaking at the Sherman Elementary School. J. Molito discussed many ideas for educational programs on the farm. The Outreach Committee would like to utilize these materials for educational purposes. Discussion followed regarding the illuminated "cross" atop of the silo. Once the Town assumes ownership of the Farm, many felt the cross will need to be removed. The sub-committee will continue to seek additional members and input.

Public Comment-

Kevin Clark spoke in reference to the future of the Farm. He was a long time friend of Mr. Hapanowich and learned a lot from him. He sees this Committee has a lot of visions, a lot of passion and a lot on inaction. He encouraged the Committee to educate the 4000 citizens of Sherman to develop and nurture the farm to utilize the land as a teaching tool to promote sustainability educational programming.

Allan Beatty asked what the future ideas were in reference to the use of the farm and asked if any thought was put into planting corn. He also recommended utilizing the land as a teaching tool specifically for children, 4H clubs, etc

J Lysnsky stated he would be willing to pay a little more in taxes knowing the use of the Farm stays in control of the Town, not to a private contractor.

Adjournment-

N. Volkmar Moved to Adjourn the Meeting at 9:15 p.m.
Seconded by: C. Shulman Vote: For: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted:



Christine Branson
February 26, 2014