

AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HAPPY ACRES FARMS

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

Meeting Minutes

FINAL

Members Present: N. Volkmar, J. Wozniak, L. LaVia, R. Lenihan, W. Pitcher, E. Smolen

Public & Invited: K. Parker, A. Beatty, B. McCann, J. Munch and J. Judd

Call to Order:

Chair, N. Volkmar Called the Meeting to Order at 7:05 p.m.

Old Business:

a. Approval of Minutes of February 19, 2014:

J. Wozniak Moved to Approve the Minutes of February 19, 2014 as written.

Seconded by: W. Pitcher Vote: For: Unanimous

b. BoS Report:

N. Volkmar read email correspondence into record from First Selectman C. Cope in reference to the agenda items requested from the Committee. The email was in response to the following:

HAFC Question: Can the Town sell the Farm?

Response: Yes, likely at a loss. But that's not really the direction the Town is going right now.

HAFC Question: What is the role of the HAFC?

Response: Will be answered at the BoS Regular Meeting of March 27, 2014.

HAFC: What is the current status of financials and legal fees?

Response: The Town appropriated funds at a Town Meeting to include legal fees incurred regarding the Farm.

HAFC Question: Status of transition plan for March 19th.

Response: The Town was not able to reach a contract agreement with the former farmer, Frank Pruchnick, but we were able to secure another local cattle farmer, Jeff Lyscynski LLC, as interim Farm Manager until June 30, 2014. Mr. Lyscynski began work this morning. The Atty. for the Happanowich Trust, the Town Atty. and I met this morning, walked the property to verify the inventory of farm equipment as provided by the Trust, and to verify the herd as inventoried by the Trust.

HAFC Question: RFP Status?

Response: The BoS is working on a draft of the RFP and expect it to be up for distribution at the BoS Regular Meeting of March 27, 2014

Town Business Administrator, L. LaVia was present to provide additional information regarding financial questions. Discussion followed in reference to Atty. fees and other expenses captured since Mr. Happanowich's passing.

Status Reports from Sub-Committees-

RFP: Not present

Outreach- J. Wozniak

Ms. Wozniak reported the subcommittee has met approximately 4 or 5 times, and have had discussions about planning outreach events to involve the community. The intent of this subcommittee would be to explore possibilities and offer assistance to the BoS to alleviate the burden.

Open Discussion-

The Committee discussed building on the initial recommendation from the last meeting to ask for input relating to an RFP for the farm and other aspects of operation. The Committee discussed the need for the public's input at length. The Committee stated the public needs to know the financial implications as well as the impacts other types of farming. Some Committee members felt there was still value in the HAFC continuing, many volunteer hours have been spent forming ideas to present to the BoS. Some suggested a member of the BoS should Chair the HAFC, some felt the Committee should dissolve and leave it's sub-committees intact to act when needed by the BoS, others felt moving toward a foundation would be the best direction. J. Wozniak recommended the Committee make a series of Motions to help assist before the BoS makes a decision whether the HAFC is to continue or be dissolved. The following Motions were made:

J. Wozniak Moved to request the BoS consider the full perspective of the citizens of Sherman to be determined by public communication such as a write in survey to determine categories such as farm usage and funding of the Farm operations.
Seconded by: E. Smolen **Vote: For: Unanimous**


R. Lenihan Moved to recommend to the BoS to clarify what constitutes the parameters of "Maintenance" as it relates to the Trust Documents.
Seconded by: L. LaVia **Vote: For: Unanimous**

J. Wozniak Moved to recommend to the BoS as a long term vision of the Farm be the following: maximum sustainable use of the property, community participation, environmental and agricultural education, protection of the farm as a symbol of Sherman's enduring rural character and service to all citizens of Sherman.
Seconded by: E. Smolen **Vote: For:5 Abstain: 1**

Adjournment:

E. Smolen Moved to Adjourn the Meeting at 9:00 p.m.
Seconded by: L. LaVia **Vote: For: Unanimous**

Respectfully submitted:


Christine Branson, Clerk
March 26, 2014