



David B. Cohen
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NEWTON FARM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES January 3, 2008

Meeting opened at 7:09 pm with the following attendees:

MEMBERS PRESENT: P. Lewenberg, Chair, J. Harper, C. Lappin, J. Hepburn, L. Bruyn, and staff, Anne Phelps; V. Schnell and R. Shoul arrived later.

MEMBERS ABSENT: D. Lang

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Gene Rubin, NCF and Rebekah Smillie, NCF, and Peter Barrer, NCF, & Ted Chapman, NCF

Newton Community Farm – update on current activities

P. Lewenberg opened with a suggestion that the Commission develop a “report card” relative to the ordinance. J. Hepburn asked how that would look? L. Bruyn asked about a time frame. P. Lewenberg said he is not suggesting any definite time and offered to go through the ordinance and summarize main points in bullet form for next meeting.

Barn Update – Peter Barrer

The NCF has received a verbal report, with written report to follow, from Russ Feldman. Mr. Feldman suggests renovating rather than rebuilding the barn. The first phase of the work would be the maintenance on the barn, with an estimated cost of \$225, 000, and a target date for completion of next December (2008). A substantial amount of that has been raised already. P. Lewenberg suggested the Commission should present the specifications to Nick Parnell to double check that the proposed work is all considered maintenance and the city bidding and hiring rules will not apply to it. The second phase of the work is the remodeling work (list of priorities from the last meeting). C. Lappin asked about the grant from the Lacey Fund (\$125,000). Peter B. said that money is still committed, and another \$35,000 has been pledged for the maintenance. Additional funds must be raised for the remodeling work, which could take another 2-3 years. G. Rubin said the Community Farm’s ability to raise money for phase 2 will probably depend on how phase 1 goes. R. Smillie reported that Greg has been away, and there is not much to report from the farm operation.

General Business & Announcements

Quarterly budget report – Ted Chapman

Ted emailed a revised budget after opening the mail and receiving a substantial amount of checks to post. He reported the Farm brought in about \$5,700 from the fall appeal letter, and \$10,000 came from Ledgebrook to raise the current barn repair fund to about \$135,000. Income last year paid for all farm

Newton Farm Commission

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expenses and salaries. There was no budget for an intern or for a bonus for Greg, and the cost of the special event was underestimated. Even so, the Farm ended with a net income of \$17,500 for 2007 (not counting the barn fund). The appeal letter netted slightly more than the previous year. J. Hepburn asked Ted to double check the amount netted from the special event; she thinks the Farm may have netted more than reported. L. Bruyn thinks it is confusing to break the figures down into subsets, with some sub-headings in bold and some not. Ted will try to revise to make it more self-explanatory.

AgCom Workshop Dec 8th – Judy Hepburn

Judy and Louise attended the workshop and thought it very interesting. Judy brought back a contact list for MA Department of Agriculture and an information sheet. The Department of Agriculture offers energy subsidies for agriculture. The Newton Farm Commission was the only such group represented among the Agricultural Commission members attending. There is an Agricultural Tourism Map – perhaps it would be good publicity/recognition for the Farm to be on it. March 18th is “Agricultural Day” at the state house. P. Lewenberg thought it a good idea to get Newton Farm on the Ag. Tourism Map. Judy will contact the web site to get us on the list. Louise will contact the meeting organizers to see how to get the Farm on the state ma/brochure. Rhona brought in a book for the farm library, Manifestos on the future of Food and Seed.

Approval of 12/6/07 Minutes

Jim Harper emailed Anne some suggested changes to minutes, and minor corrections/changes were suggested. **J. Harper moved to approve minutes as amended. R. Shoul seconded. Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.**

Miscellaneous

Low Salt Area

Dave Turocy responded to the request for a low or no salt zone along Nahanton that the street receives too much traffic to dispense with salt. Members discussed the need for more testing of the water from the well to better determine and document if and when the water is high in salt. If drainage from the road goes into the culvert at the low end of the field, there might not be much opportunity for salt to get into the water table from the road, but more information is needed. G. Rubin suggested that if the well water is high in salt, regardless of the source, the best cure might be to dig a deeper well.

Tree Removal

Ted said the trees have again been posted and there should be another hearing on removal of the maples this month. Judy said she saw a sign only on the tree on the corner and hoped the trees to actually be removed had been posted. Ted will keep the Farm Commission informed on any new developments re this issue.

Farm name-response from Law Dept

Anne reported on her inquiry to the Law Department regarding a change from using Newton Angino Farm to using Newton Farm. The Law Department reported that the ordinance could be changed but that the Mayor would prefer to keep “Angino” as part of the name [it has been removed from the bottom of the stationary for the farm].

Crosswalk: will be on docket for next traffic council

J. Harper moved to adjourn. Rhona seconded. Vote: All in favor. Meeting adjourned about 9:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Phelps, Sr. Environmental Planner

