



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Planning and Development
Michael J. Kruse, Director

David B. Cohen
Mayor

Telephone
(617)-796-1134
Telefax
(617) 796-1086
TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089

NEWTON FARM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES February 7, 2008

Meeting opened at 7:02 pm with the following attendees:

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Harper, Acting Chair, C. Lappin, J. Hepburn, D. Lang V. Schnell and R. Shoul, L. Mottard, and staff, Anne Phelps

MEMBERS ABSENT: P. Lewenberg, L. Bruyn

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Greg Maslowe, Farm Manager, Gene Rubin, NCF and Rebekah Smillie, NCF, and Peter Barrer, NCF, Ted Chapman, NCF, Jon Regosin, and Professor of Architecture, Paul Hajian, and students Laura Watson, Christopher Taurasi, Amanda Prochanronarong, and Won Chai from Massachusetts College of Art & Design.

Jim Harper opened the meeting at 7:02 and welcomed Mr. Lee Mottard, newly appointed by the mayor to represent the Parks & Recreation Department on the Commission.

Newton Community Farm – update on current activities

MA College of Arts – After seeing the student presentations to the Community Farm, Ted Chapman was able to schedule the students to come and present their designs to the Farm Commission.

J. Harper welcomed Professor Hajian and his students, who had prepared various conceptual plans for the barn repair and future use as part of a class project. The students attempted to preserve the historic appearance of the barn, while considering the new uses to which it might be put. They presented their design ideas using display boards.

The first presentation, by Won Chai, was a proposal to add a row of louvered windows in center of the wall of the loft area, pour the whole floor in concrete, perhaps glazed to reflect heat. He proposed adding an addition at the back of the barn (historically, there *was* such an addition, which was demolished when it became unsound). This would be the kitchen. Hay would be used as insulation for the kitchen and a proposed bathroom.

A design by Amanda Prochanronarong would add a row of windows in the same style as, and above the existing windows, and would extend the roof to cover the back bay. A new barn door could be added on the second floor – with elements of a ramp and road already present, this could be used to load hay into the loft area from the back of the barn. The ceiling/loft floor could be raised to provide more headroom on the first floor and the first floor could be cleared for a classroom and storage when the space was not being used for educational activities.

Newton Farm Commission

1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, Massachusetts 02459

www.ci.newton.ma.us

A design by Laura Watson entailed replacing the windows on the side with 5 very tall windows, nor necessarily of the same width, and adding skylights for light. The first floor would be opened for teaching, and the second floor loft used for storage.

The fourth design was presented by Prof. Hajian for (Mike Rivers) a student who could not be present. This concept provided for a produce market on the first floor with stairs on the side to access the second floor loft area, which was opened up to show the truss structure and provide classroom space.

The final proposal was presented by Chris Taurasi and relied on stepping back the first floor and putting windows in the second floor in a configuration that provided good light while reducing summer solar heating. A cupola was also added to siphon heat from the barn in summer. There were also lots of features added to catch roof run-off and store water.

Barn Update

P. Barrer reported that the Community Farm has been quietly raising money for the barn repair from private donors. In a previous meeting with Nick Parnell, he (and Peter) thought they understood that repair of the roof, removal of the siding, and repair of support beams would be considered “maintenance” and would not be subject to city bid and prevailing wage requirements. In a recent meeting, after the proposed work was described, Nick informed them that the work would have to go out to bid and comply with prevailing wage requirements. The Community Farm members are disappointed, as this is likely to increase the cost by as much as an estimated 20-30%, and it will take longer, to raise the money and go through the bidding process. D. Lang said the scale and scope of the project is just more than can be considered “maintenance.” Nick Parnell wants to help and is very comfortable working with the architect, Russ Feldman. V. Schnell asked whether the amount of money the city had to contribute vs. private donors would be taken into consideration. C. Lappin replied it would not. The Farm did give money back to CPA several years ago, and might be able to re-apply to the CPA for work under historic preservation, getting enough to make up the difference in cost needed to pay prevailing wages. A contractor needs to help estimate cost of project so there is a target to aim for in fundraising. J. Regosin said he is concerned because some of the private donors may become too frustrated with the long delay and withdraw their offers.

General Business & Announcements

Annual Business Plan 2008 – emailed out by T. Chapman (includes quarterly budget report emailed out for last meeting). T. Chapman reported the Business Plan (and budget) has been approved by the Newton Farm Commission. J. Harper commented on the education program, which did not fare as well as expected. There was discussion about the street trees that need to be removed to allow sun to reach all the garden crops. T. Chapman and G. Maslowe have made efforts to contact all the people who wrote letters objecting to removal of the trees to explain why the farm wants to remove them, and in hopes that some or all of the residents objecting would rescind their objections. Only one person (of an initial 6 objectors) has written to remove his objection to removal of the trees. Discussion of the budget focused on concern that the number of people with full and half shares might not be right.

Motion by D. Lang to approve the business plan. Second by R. Shoul. Following discussion regarding wording of label regarding income due to produce shares, motion amended to alter the labelling of the income from selling produce shares. Vote to approve: Unanimous.

Approval of 1/3/08 Minutes

S. Lappin moved to approve minutes of 1/3/08. R. Shoul seconded. Vote: Six (6) votes in favor; one (1) D. Lang abstained. Motion passed.

Miscellaneous

Low Salt Area

T. Chapman suggested the Farm Commission should pursue the request for a low salt zone along Nahanton with the new Commissioner of Public Works.

Tree Removal

T. Chapman asked if there is consensus among the Farm Commission members to request the mayor intervene and allow the farm to remove the street trees. Following discussion, it was decided it would be appropriate to keep to the original offer to the Tree Committee, to pay for the removal of the trees, if they can be removed. Ted will keep the Farm Commission informed on any new developments re this issue.

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