



David B. Cohen
Mayor

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NEWTON FARM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES April 10, 2008

Meeting opened at 7:00 pm with the following attendees:

MEMBERS PRESENT: P. Lewenberg, Chair, J. Harper, J. Hepburn, D. Lang
V. Schnell, L. Bruyn, L. Mottard, and staff, Anne Phelps

MEMBERS ABSENT: R. Shoul

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: G. Rubin, NCF, T. Chapman, and R. Smillie, NCF, Alice Ingerson,
Community Preservation Program.

Introductions were made. Ira Morgenstern is a new member and the new treasurer for the Newton Community Farm, Inc.

Community Preservation & Newton Community Farm – Alice Ingerson spoke about the National Forest Service guidelines for “historic,” and described how she thought that might relate to the barn. G. Rubin asked why she was concentrating on the barn. She said she thought the Community Farm was considering alterations to the barn. Ted asked about being on the state Historic Register, and noted that Laura Kreitzer and her intern had worked on compiling documentation for the historic nature of the barn. Ted asked if there are things you cannot do to a structure deemed “historic.” Peter commented on how there had been changes in delivery of the farm product from the past to the present CSA model.

Alice noted that a lot of the history is in the building, including tool marks and indicators of materials that were re-used for barn construction. When tearing out parts of the building, the contractor should go slowly and look at the materials – performing what is called “careful demolition,” and documenting as work is done. Involving people from the community in this could get them more interested in the barn’s history.

Louise asked whether these barns are seen elsewhere in the country (with no cattle) where the building has tried to maximize the light coming into the building. Peter said he had mentioned the possibility of using shutters that would blend with the barn.

Alice said there are 3 basic options: Preservation, Adaptive Re-use, and Restoration for time period. She said the last is actually the most “radical,” because it may entail replacing parts of the structure with materials from a narrow time period, while “preservation” only means halting the decline of the structure to keep it erect and safe for use. She thinks important aspects of ‘barn-ness’ include a big open interior space, with windows below (don’t need them in the loft area), where people were coming and going and working.

Newton Farm Commission

1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, Massachusetts 02459

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Alice said the most important thing to do is to develop a “story” of 1-2 pp that describes what we want to preserve/think is important to preserve, historically. In doing this, the ability to request help through the CP Program will also be preserved. Vaunita reminded us that barns needed that big open space below to store 2 wagons or carriages and a shed.

Newton Community Farm

Update – R. Smillie said planting will begin tomorrow, with onions, arugula and other greens, and that the bee hives are on their way. The Farm will be able to continue to “borrow” the hives or to buy them at cost. An orchard bed has been created and trees for it will be delivered next week. Classes are being held at Ledgebrook, for now. Becka said there is still one objector who does not want to withdraw his objection. Peter said that he is willing to go to mayor if the objector does not withdraw after another meeting, to ask for an exemption. Peter Barrer is in Australia. Ted is meeting with the city’s ADA committee, and Russ Feldman has met with John Lojek. Cheryl also has been checking into requirements for change of use. She left Peter a message that the parking depends on usage (the maximum number of people at a time), and should be established prior to the start of construction. From the conversation with John Lojek, the barn might need 10-15 parking spaces, and 1 handicapped space for each 15 regular spaces.

Discussion about road salt and its possible effect on well water followed, with Peter relaying information from Cheryl that she spoke with the new Commissioner of Public Works, and he is open to discussion on the subject of a low salt zone.

Peter (?) asked whether Ouida, in the Law Department, had anything drafted yet regarding the Farm’s option to avoid city bidding process if it is not using public funds for the work. There needs to be an agreement in place prior to the Community Farm, Inc. hiring a contractor for the repair of the barn. We are not sure if the Law Department is waiting on further information from the AG office. Anne will check on this.

First Quarter Financial Report – Ira Morgenstern handed out the first Quarter Financial Report. He said expenses are a bit higher this year because insurance is a bit higher and maintenance needs greater. But the Farm is on target for CSA sales and expenses.

Miscellaneous

Tree removal (see under Farm Update)

Traffic signs – Traffic Council recommended that warning signs be put up on Winchester and Nahanton. The Traffic Engineer had 3 signs made and put up near the Farm warning of a “Farm Stand Ahead.” Clint Shukel said if the signs are not in the best spot(s), they can be moved.

General Business & Announcements

Approval of 36/08 Minutes – **Motion by J. Harper to accept the minutes as written. Seconded by L. Mottard. Vote: All in favor. Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Phelps, Sr. Env. Planner

