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Mayor

# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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## NEWTON FARM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES May 15, 2008 7:00 pm at City Hall Rm 209

Meeting opened at 7:10 pm with the following attendees:

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** P. Lewenberg, Chair, J. Hepburn, R. Shoul, V. Schnell, L. Bruyn, and Anne Phelps, staff; D. Lang arrived later.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** J. Harper, L. Mottard

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** G. Rubin, NCF, T. Chapman, NCF, Peter Barrer, John Regosin, NCF, and R. Smillie, NCF, Alice Ingerson, Community Preservation Program and Ouida Young, Law Department.

Introductions were made.

### **Newton Community Farm – update on current activities**

Contract between City of Newton and Newton Community Farm –Ouida Young, representing the Law Department, informed all that in order for the Community Farm to manage the project of the barn repair, they either have to amend the original agreement between NCF and the Farm Commission or create a free-standing agreement. The people who approved the original contract would have to approve an amended version. If the NCF wants to add additional amendments (change the length of the contract), that could be done later, since time is of the essence.

P. Lewenberg asks if there is overlap between timing of necessary approvals. A. Ingerson says, ideally, the historic review should have been done in the beginning, but by doing it now, she hoped to prevent the loss of the farm's historic integrity, especially for future funding.

Discussion led into historic features of barn. V. Schnell said she would like to have the item [historic features] on the agenda, and she feels the NCF never stopped to talk about everyone's view of the farm before NCF began planning the renovation. V. Schnell said she thinks she is more of a strict preservationist, and she wants the barn to remain looking like a barn. She says the planned changes are pretty extensive. She thinks the corner where the stanchion is and the cows were milked is an integral part of the barn. She thinks the corner where the electrical equipment was found should be preserved, and the three small windows should be preserved. Since the gable ends are not as central a part of the view of the barn, maybe changes could be made there that would not change the view so much, and she would like the barn to look "like a barn, on the inside."

### **Newton Farm Commission**

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T. Chapman said he has pointed out serious structural issues that had to be addressed. P. Lewenberg talked about changes in use even when the property was still a farm. T. Chapman said the building codes preclude keeping some of the features V. Schnell would like to save. J. Regosin said we could pour new concrete floors after repairs. L. Bruyn said she loves the outdoor sliding door, that, when closed, still looks like a barn door. But, she is concerned about other features.

The choice is between preserving the barn as when it was last used by the Angino family or having a barn that will be remodeled for education and current use needs. P. Lewenberg said he has depended on D. Lang to protect the historical features, and if D. Lang accepts it, he thinks it is O.K.

L. Bruyn said she thinks we should do what needs to be done to make it usable for modern needs.

Report on research and consensus on Historic features of barn -A. Ingerson spoke about the conclusions from the *charette*. She asked how much of the exterior renovation that needs to be done immediately would lock us into future changes (because change is too expensive, for example).

R. Smillie said the intent of the barn process has been to 1) take the spirit of what's happened on the farm, connecting people to the soil, without a barn that meets code, to a future with a barn that does meet the building code, and 2) when the changes are made have a barn that still evokes "barn-ness" whenever possible. During the charette they talked about farmer(s) being practical, but not taking huge leap, making slow changes for practicality. P. Lewenberg asked whether the Commission agrees with and supports the plan as provided by Peter Barrer (without detailed specifications, as yet).

Barn Renovation Vote - to approve plan for barn repair

**Motion by L. Bruyn to accept the conceptual plan with the understanding people have done their best to preserve 'barn-ness.' Second by R. Shoul. Vote: P. Lewenberg, L. Bruyn, and R. Shoul voted "aye." V. Schnell and J. Hepburn voted "nay." Motion passed.**

Legal Agreement for Barn Renovation

O. Young spoke about the need for a change to the legal agreement between the Farm Commission and the Newton Community Farm that will permit the Community Farm, Inc. to contract to make structural repairs to the barn, including exterior modifications. A draft has been distributed and she reviewed it and asked for any additional suggestions needed. She reviewed the requirements of city ordinance(s) requiring the proposed changes in the barn to be reviewed by the Historic Commission. O. Young said she will need a scope to attach to the amended agreement, and suggested the work should be in two phases. If the façade is on the table, that also includes windows. The scope and the limits of the scope need to be spelled out. P. Lewenberg said that D. Lang will continue to represent the NFC at Historic Commission meetings reviewing the proposed farm changes. L. Bruyn asked if we have approved drawings. O. Young will reference a set of plans for Phase I (repair) and Phase II (renovation). A Final review by the architect (Russ Feldman), the building owner, and by NCF will be required.

Don Lang arrived about 8:25pm.

Plans will be submitted to the Historic Commission for review at their meeting a week from now. June 5<sup>th</sup> is next scheduled NSF meeting. Following discussion, the consensus was that the need to respond to the Historic Commission in writing would not delay any other steps in the process. J. Regosin raised issue of extending license between NFC and Newton Community Farm, Inc., which is due to expire next March, with the option to extend two years. J. Regosin wants to extend for longer. L. Bruyn said she is amazed that the Community Farm wants to keep doing what they're doing. V. Schnell agrees that 3 yrs is too short. To extend, the NFC would have to send out another request for letters of interest. A docket request can be filed to ask the BOA for a longer duration contract. O. Young suggests it be separate from the amendment to the contract to allow the barn repair to go forward.

### Newton Angino Farm – Preservation Priorities

A. Ingerson summarized the results of the charette. She has organized the results on a spreadsheet. The barn is probably the most important symbol of the farm, and the *charette* was an attempt to determine what features are “historic” and should be preserved.

Farm Report – R. Smillie reported that they have found someone who will take produce to the Friday farmer’s market. She reported on what crops are being grown – tomato seedlings are for sale. She announced the Spring Festival will be held on June 7, from 2-4pm. Activities will include tours, kids’ stuff, food, music, and the farm stand will be open.

Trees – T. Chapman said the last person that objected to the removal of the street trees has agreed to withdraw his objection, but has not yet put it in writing.

### **General Business & Announcements**

Approval of 4/10/08 Minutes

**Motion by J. Hepburn to approve the minutes of April 10<sup>th</sup>. Second by R. Shoul. Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.**

Everyone wished to thank Peter Barrer, who has spent so much of his time working on the barn repair project.

### **Miscellaneous**

Meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Phelps, Sr. Environmental Planner

