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Mayor

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NEWTON FARM COMMISSION MINUTES October 2, 2008 7:00 pm at City Hall , Rm 209

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: P. Lewenberg, Chair, J. Hepburn, J. Harper, L. Mottard , R. Shoul, , L. Bruyn, Rick Lipof (new member), and Anne Phelps, staff.

MEMBERS ABSENT: V. Schnell, D. Lang

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Becka Smillie & Peter Barrer, NCF

Peter L. said he would like to add an agenda item to discuss the upcoming contract renewal at the end of the discussion (see below).

Newton Community Farm Inc. Report

Report on Farm Operation– Becka Smillie talked to Greg today and reports the farm is about three weeks from the end of the season. Soon the farm stand will be open only on Saturday, and will only have cold weather greens. Greg is going to grow greens in the greenhouse. Judy asked the purpose of that. Becka said it is an experiment to provide greens earlier in the year. The fund-raising Lumiere (restaurant) dinner is scheduled for Wednesday November 5th this year. The kiosk is up. Ted expects to finish it by Halloween. The Fall Festival at the farm will be held October 26th from 1-4pm. Becka asked members to consider items they could donate to the silent auction at the festival. Last year a members donated home-made beer, a photo session, and a cruise of Boston harbor. Maybe when the barn is done it can provide a space to hold the silent auction as a special event. Becka said she would especially appreciate old quilts, or hand-made art works, or similar items. Louise asked what price range people were paying for the items. Beck replied that the donor suggested a price range, and the items sold within that range or for more money (a \$100 gift certificate for dinner sold for \$150). The cool rainy weather caused the loss of the fall spinach crop. The Education Coordinator is working in exchange for a food share. The Education Committee is talking about a Junior High camp in Nahanton park. High School volunteers helped out this summer, as did students from Lasell College, but the number of volunteers is tapering off as the growing season comes to an end.

Update on Barn Work -Peter B. reported on fundraising efforts for the barn, with current funds equal to \$232,000 budgeted for Phase I. All of that has been raised, except for the \$25,000 contingency, of which they are short \$12,000. They still think the contingency will not be needed. Demolition is all done and the

Newton Farm Commission

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foundation is solid. The timber framing will be completed in one more day. Wood found in the barn, and wood the contractor brought in from other barns was used to replace damaged wood. Andy Coleman (Poor Farm Builders) is the contractor, and he and his two assistants have been doing all the framing. The wall insulation is about one third done. It is thick and will keep the barn warm. They still must complete the shed roof. If shingles are used, they will be black, if a metal roof, the material will be anodized silver. Don Lang also agrees with the choices. All work has been reviewed by Nick Parnell, City of Newton.

Jim H. asked if the NCF has been keeping the donors informed. Peter B. said they have been falling behind a bit on that, but he will catch up soon.

Peter L. asked Becka about other fundraising. She said the Fall Appeal is going out. The Farm received about \$10,000 from Whole Foods grocery (two stores giving 5% of net sales for one day). Whole Foods will continue to support the Farm in other ways. They will likely donate hot cider and soup to the fall festival for sale. Members suggested that other local businesses, such as Roche Bros., Trader Joe's, Legal Seafood, and Russo's, might be willing to contribute in some way to support the Farm.

Louise asked if the NCF has calculated the number of volunteer hours donated this year. They have not, although they estimated the number of volunteers.

General Business

Approval of September 4, 08 Minutes – Judy provided notes of some typos. Members asked whether they should vote if they were not at the meeting. Answer – No, should abstain if not present.

Motion by Peter L. to approve minutes with minor edits. Second by Judy. Vote: In favor: Judy, Rhona, Peter, and Jim. Abstained: Lee, Louise, and Rick. Motion carried.

Board Membership & Reappointments – Two names are put forward as possible new members – and the information should be relayed to the Mayor's office by Anne. They are: Beryl Shief, who lives on Evelyn Road, and Dwayne Hillis who lives near Angino Farm.

Officer Elections -Election of new officers should be done during the November meeting. Jim and Peter L. have each been in office 3 years, and by the Rules and Regulations they should step down. Anne should ask Ouida whether the officers can switch positions, or if two completely new members need to fill the positions, or whether the rules can be relaxed in some way.

Contract – First question: Does NFC want to extend the contract with the NCF? Following discussion it appeared the Community Farm members favored a longer contract because of the commitment of donors to long-term projects such as the barn repair and rehabilitation. Following discussion,

Motion by Jim H. to get a new contract with the NCF that is 15 yrs in length, broken into 5-yr review periods with options other than termination. Second by Rhona. Vote: All in favor. Motion carried.

Since the manager needs to be notified in December regarding whether the NFC wants to renew the contract, the Commission needs to decide what it wants to do soon. Peter L. suggested a 2-3-member sub-committee to discuss options. Rick, Peter L., Judy and Lee will meet with Ouida to discuss how to get a longer contract. Jim L. asked that Anne find and relay the "Selection Procedure" used to hire the farm manager. This included Public Bidding, advertisement, and other stages. Rick asked for a copy of the contract. Peter B. said another item in the agreement (actually in the ordinance) is the requirement to do an annual audited financial report. He would like to do a less expensive financial review. Discussion of the Newton History Museum and Newton Commonwealth Golf Course were discussed as other examples of city-owned land administered under different types of contracts.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Phelps, Sr. Environmental Planner