

**Town of Medway**  
**Agricultural Commission**  
**Medway Public Library, Historical Room**  
**26 High Street, Medway MA 02053**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**June 8, 2016**

**Present:** Chairman Paul Atwood, Vice Chairman Bruce Hamblin and Secretary Margaret Perkins.

Paul Atwood, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:37 PM.

**Approval of Agenda and Minutes:**

The agenda for the meeting of June 8, 2016 was approved unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes from May 4, 2016 as submitted was made by Mr. Hamblin, seconded by Ms. Perkins and approved unanimously.

Ms. Perkins will find out about adding committee member information, meeting agendas and approved minutes to the Town of Medway Agricultural Commission page.

**Citizen Comments:**

No citizens present.

**Update on Chapter 61:**

Chairman Atwood indicated that he has not had the opportunity to do anything with the map. He asked Ms. Perkins if any of the computers in the library's new Maker Space are equipped with AutoCAD. Ms. Perkins provided a list of computer software available and confirmed that AutoCAD is on the list.

Chairman Atwood noted that in order to qualify for Chapter 61, the parcel of land must have an annual gross production income of \$500.

Chairman Atwood guessed that there are maybe 40 parcels in town and that many have multiple uses (pastures, wooded lots, non-productive land, pumpkins, shrubs, Christmas trees, hay, blueberries, and vegetables). The majority is pasture.

**Update on Animal Control Matters:**

Chairman Atwood spoke with Animal Control Officer Brenda Hamelin and informed the Board of the following:

- Animal Control currently oversees approximately 200 chicken coops in town

- Residents need to be made aware of regulations (i.e. all poultry has to be blood tested to ensure they are not carrying Avian Flu). A Statewide ordinance is in place to make sure testing occurs.
- Chicken coops need to be inspected to make sure they adhere to animal regulations under Board of Health. The regulations have been formulated but not formally adopted; legal is checking to ensure they fit within state guidelines.
- Other areas that need consideration: poultry in residential zones, no roosters allowed, housing for poultry, size of lot.
- Anyone owning 5 acres of land (residential or commercial) has the right to farm it.

Ms. Perkins noted that the Board of Health in the town of Upton tried to enact regulations that would require a permit for more than 6 animals and it did not get passed.

Chairman Atwood stated that regulations are in existence in regard to what constitutes a kennel (more than 3 and a permit needs to be obtained).

Ms. Perkins noted that a large percentage of the general public is not familiar with the Right to Farm By-Law.

Animal Control Officer Hamelin also provided information on livestock Medway. The three biggest beef farms have between 60-70 animals in total and Cassidy's has approximately 300 pigs on average throughout the year.

Ms. Perkins inquired about records for sheep and goats and Chairman Atwood stated that those numbers were not discussed with Ms. Hamelin. Chairman Atwood informed that Ms. Hamelin does do barn inspections yearly as required by state law.

There are 7-8 bee keepers in town. Chairman Atwood is uncertain about regulations and inspections.

Chairman Atwood concluded by stating that this information gives the Board insight as to what the town looks like in terms of farm animals. Additionally, he noted that part of the purpose of this committee is to diffuse issues and make people aware of regulations.

Ms. Perkins asked about next steps as taking roadside inventory has proved unreliable and ineffective.

#### **Update on Recruitment:**

Ms. Perkins informed the Board that she has been unsuccessful in recruiting additional members for the vacant Board seats for the Agricultural Commission. The posts on the Norfolk County Agricultural High School Facebook page received no response.

Chairman Atwood noted that Medway Community Farm has also had some difficulty retaining Board members and is currently short-staffed and therefore likely unable to provide a member to serve on the Agricultural Commission at this time.

Mr. Hamblin suggested the Medway Farmer's Market as another feasible avenue for finding an individual to sit on the Board.

Ms. Perkins noted that the garden club is mostly concerned with flowers. She further stated that the Medway Senior Center has a brand new greenhouse and is interested in producing vegetables to be

used for preparing meals at the center. The President of the garden club is involved with getting it off the ground.

Members of the Board will continue communications with representatives from Norfolk County Agricultural High School to inform students of the opportunity to serve on the Agricultural Commission as associate member(s).

**Other Business:**

Ms. Perkins has a friend that grows grapes and is interested in coming to the Medway Public Library to speak about grape propagation.

Ms. Perkins recently attended a MA Wildlife open-house where a large amount of information was provided related to living with wildlife (namely coyotes, fishers, etc.) in suburban settings. She thought this would be an interesting and useful topic for an information session in Medway and that it may be helpful to alleviate some of the anxiety residents may have toward the natural wildlife resident to the area.

Chairman Atwood noted that he has a small collection of historical agricultural books that he would like to donate if there is interest. Ms. Perkins expressed interest in looking at the collection and stated that other libraries in our network may wish to keep it. Chairman Atwood will bring the books to the next Agricultural Commission meeting.

Mr. Hamblin brought up the Boston Globe City Sprouts program which is geared toward introducing students to gardening. Ms. Perkins noted that the students in Medway do get hands-on gardening exposure to gardening with the help of the Medway Community Farm. Mr. Hamblin plans on sharing the program's information with the Deputy Superintendent to get a handle on the scope of the program and see if it is something that can be used to enrich our operations in Medway.

**Action items:**

Ms. Perkins will look into getting more information in regard to the resignation of a Board Member of the Holliston Agricultural Commission. This will give our Board some perspective into the agricultural issues neighboring towns are facing.

**Upcoming Meetings:**

July 20, 2016

**Adjournment:**

The Board adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Filipa LeClair

Meeting Recording Secretary