

**DURHAM AGRICULTURE COMMISSION**

Meeting minutes

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall

Present

Members: Warren Herzig, Vivian Caturano, Richard Porter, Roger Passavant, Melissa Greenbacker

Alternates: Joe Pasquale

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairman Warren Herzig. Roll call was taken.
2. A motion was made by Richard Porter and seconded by Vivian Caturano to accept the December 15, 2009 meeting agenda as presented. Approved unanimously.
3. Motion made by Richard Porter and seconded by Vivian Caturano to accept the minutes of the October 20, 2009 regular meeting and of the November 10, 2009 special meeting. Approved unanimously.
4. Motion made by Vivian Caturano and seconded by Richard Porter to approve the 2010 meeting dates as printed on the agenda. Approved unanimously.
5. Warren Herzig discussed the meeting he and Melissa Greenbacker attended in East Haddam on November 30, 2009 with an agriculture commission study committee. This committee is gathering information and will make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen of East Haddam. Warren and Melissa shared Durham's experiences in setting up an ag commission. A representative from Guilford's ag commission also attended. Guilford's ag commission secured a grant through the state's Ag Viability program to promote agriculture. Warren suggested that Durham's ag commission look into this grant and have a representative from Guilford speak to the group about what they are doing. Warren will call the chairman of Guilford's ag commission to have a representative speak to this commission.
6. Old Business: Ag Inventory. The group reviewed the progress of identifying the agricultural properties in town. This led to a discussion about Durham's policies of alerting neighbors about hearings, visits from town enforcement officers, and the handling of complaints from neighbors. It was noted that with the new Code of Ethics going into effect February 1, 2010, that it would be a good time to reinforce the town's procedures and policies.
7. New Business : Warren Herzig discussed the goals of the Commission for 2010. These include: meeting with a representative from Guilford's Ag Commission, following state

legislation, a study of a right to farm ordinance, and meeting with the town's Economic Development Commission and other commissions. Enhancing the profitability of Durham's farms is of concern.

8. Warren Herzig reported on the Durham Business Expo. Farms taking part included Deerfield Farm. This is a great way for farm businesses to promote themselves. He also reported that Greenbackers held an open house on their farm in November.

Melissa Greenbacker reported that some agricultural programs are being targeted for reduction or elimination due to the state budget deficit. The state attorney general is looking to ban all outdoor wood burning furnaces, which many farms rely on to heat their barns, greenhouses, and other buildings.

Richard Porter reported that an ordinance passed by the state in 1971 which has never been enforced will affect fairs and other gatherings. Any event which lasts for more than 12 hours and has over 2000 people must comply with a long list of regulations. This includes police coverage, bathrooms, and water supply. This ordinance was passed to prevent gatherings such as Woodstock and Powder Ridge, but will have a negative effect on fairs, festivals, and farm events.

9. A motion to adjourn was made by Richard Porter and seconded by Vivian Caturano. Approved unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Greenbacker