

Charlestown Agricultural Preservation Commission
Minutes of July 12, 2017 Meeting at Town Hall

Present: Noel Rowe, Susan Barrett, Michael Merner, John Barrett

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:03PM by President Noel Rowe.
2. A quorum was present.
3. The minutes of the previous meeting on April 12, 2017 were reviewed. Michael Merner proposed and Susan Barrett seconded approval. The minutes were unanimously approved.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

In the previous meeting on April 12, 2017, the commission voted to write another letter in support of the Charlestown Council's resolution of January 10, 2017 against the FRA plan for the Old Saybrook to Kenyon bypass. President Noel Rowe wrote that letter. He also wrote the following letter opposing House Bill 6172 and handed a copy of that letter out at this meeting. Dated June 27, 2017, it read:

"As chairman of the Charlestown Agricultural Preservation Commission, the other members and I unanimously oppose House Bill 6172. This bill was not written by farmers. The Farm Bureau of RI doesn't support it. Nonfarm activities are for the local community and zoning boards to decide. This should be done so by the local community. The Right To Farm Act does not need to be modified.

"The taxpayers of Rhode Island have spent a lot to protect the farmland in RI. Farms should be farms and not primarily event venues or other commercial businesses which will drive up farmland prices and take farms out of production."

This letter was sent to officials Algiere, Ruggerio, Morgan, Fogarty, Fillippi and Kennedy.

The committee still needs alternate members and our search is currently underway, Vice President Susan Barrett called Pat Morgan to ask if she would be willing to serve on the CAPC as an alternate. She has not responded yet. The file clerk sent Noel Rowe an email saying that the Town Council approved Maro Newman as a member of the CAPC but Morrow needed to swear before the town before partaking in a meeting.. No member of the committee has had any contact with this person as yet.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

Vigorous discussion occurred and unanimous support was established for S0247 relating to raw milk. S0247 is "The Raw Milk Act". Noel Rowe will write a letter stating this Commission's unanimous support for S0247.

Michael Merner spoke warning against the "Food Modernization Safety Act". He said it is "a dangerous thing that goes way too far at the federal level and it will hinder small farmers excessively in its attempt to sterilize food. He predicted that if this law is strictly followed it will put most Rhode Island farms out of business. It outlaws U pick strawberry pickers from eating strawberries in the field, which is the reason why most people come to pick their own strawberry." The Rhode Island legislature has designated DEM agricultural division to administer law, which is probably better than the health department which doesn't understand farming.

6. Public Comment: There was none.

7. Adjournment: Michael Merner proposed and Susan Barrett seconded adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8 PM.

APPROVED October 25, 2017