

# Minutes of Charlestown Agricultural Preservation Commission Meeting July, 24 2019

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05PM by President Noel Rowe. Those present were Noel Rowe, Susan Barrett, Michael Merner and John Barrett.
2. A quorum was present.
3. The minutes of the previous meeting on April 17, 2019 were reviewed. Noel Rowe moved and John Barrett seconded approval. The minutes were unanimously approved.
4. OLD BUSINESS  

Zoe Madden has chosen to farm in Connecticut so she will not be joining us as an alternate on the committee. Nominations are still needed for another alternate member of this committee.
5. NEW BUSINESS  

Noel was sent a letter and documentation by Barry Gross of Meatworks, a food processing business in Westport, MA. It is a full service USDA inspected facility which has been influenced by Mary Temple Grandin's plan for such a facility. Both Ben Coerper (Wild Harmony Farm, Exeter, RI) & Carter Wilkie (Little Compton, RI) praised the facility highly. Anyone wishing a copy of the documentation for Meatworks or more specifics can contact Meatworks, 287 State Road, Westport, MA 02790. Tel.774-319-5616 or [www.meatworkswestport.com](http://www.meatworkswestport.com).
6. Noel presented an article on the health effects of PFAS a chemical used to coat food containers like plastic cups and plates, food holders, and packaging. It is even used as a fire retardant in various foams used to fight fires. This molecule has many uses but it does NOT compost. Once created it persists through composting and on into the soil. From there it is taken up by plants and animals and ultimately by people. The chemical name is polyfluoroalkyl substances gives the acronym PFAS. There is a lot of it in materials to which stains don't stick like certain carpets and clothing, etc. This is a problem currently under study but even now no composters can use any foodstuffs contaminated with this chemical. This costs us all millions of pounds of compostable materials every year.
7. Mike Merner explained the concept of "Hope's Harvest" wherein a farmer grows a crop to be harvested by needy people directly or by people working on behalf of places like the Johnnycake Center where the food is ultimately given to those who need it. The key to this concept is that the plan for the crop is laid out first. The grower does the planting and growing but when it is harvest time the people must arrive to do the gathering and distributing in a timely manner.
8. Noel passed on a letter from Roe LaBossiere containing an article from The Westerly Sun dated April 12, 2019 about Stonington's new ordinance to help and inspire farmers. Roe believes the tax savings and incentives in this ordinance may go a long way toward preserving local farms. The article and the ordinance will be reviewed and discussed at our next meeting.
9. Noel noted that we still do not have the name of a Council liaison. He will write to Amy Weinrich asking for a name.
10. PUBLIC COMMENT- There was none.

11. ADJOURNMENT Noel Rowe moved that we adjourn and Mike Merner seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55PM.

**APPROVED October 9, 2019**