



## Town of Cromwell Farmland Preservation Committee

***SPECIAL MEETING***  
***6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2010***  
***ROOM 219 CROMWELL TOWN HALL***  
***41 WEST STREET***

### MINUTES

**PRESENT:** Chairman Scott Lamberson, Joe Corlis and John Whitney

**ABSENT:** Joe Cap and John Pinney

**ALSO PRESENT:** Town Planner Craig Minor

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Lamberson called the meeting to order at 6:08p.m.
2. **Roll Call and Seating of Alternates:** The above-mentioned members were introduced. No alternates were present.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** A **motion** was made by Mr. Corlis and **seconded** by Mr. Whitney to approve the agenda and was *unanimously approved. Motion approved.*
4. **Public Comments:** None.
5. **Old Business:**
  - a. Discuss Mandated Goals and Objectives:
    1. Study existing farms:

Commissioners discussed the latest visits to the family farms of Ruske and Weidler. They both have the same issues-how they are assessed. Mr. Whitney commented that it was interesting that Mr. Ruske is diversifying by selling plants. Mr. Whitney stated that it seems that the Weidler farm is more of a hobby farm because they give away their produce although some money may be made by selling Christmas trees. The way the property is being used-it currently doesn't have the potential to become larger.

2. Develop a farmland preservation strategy:

Chairman Lamberson believes that the same sorts of issues are being confronted when the visits are being made-paying a lot for land that doesn't earn enough. Mr. Whitney talked about his success with growing and selling watermelons this year. Commissioners reviewed the list of 490 farms and discussed if they should continue visiting farms. Mr. Minor suggested continuing visitations in order to justify farms for preservation. Mr. Minor explained that it may come to be

decided that there are no farms that should be preserved but that policies should be changed to help the existing farms. Chairman Lamberson feels the efforts of the town are better spent on working on plans to benefit all farms in town instead of choosing one farm over another. Mr. Corlis stated that at least two farms are interested in selling either part of or all of their farms- there may be other farms also interested in selling. Chairman Lamberson believes the recommendation should be broad enough to help those that need it. Mr. Whitney suggested that if each tax payer put \$2 toward a separate fund to help farms it would be beneficial. Chairman Lamberson agreed that it would have to be promoted as savings compared to the costs for houses to be supported by the town (sewer, water, education, police, etc...). Mr. Whitney stated that Lebanon has a study with information in support of farm preservation. But with so few farms being in the public eye residents may have a hard time supporting such an action financially. Mr. Whitney stated that most state and federal grants require that there is a matching funds requirement. The commission agreed that whatever solution is decided it shouldn't cost tax payers any money. Chairman Lamberson feels that it would be difficult to pass anything that would cost money. Mr. Minor asked if the commission would be interested in asking for money or land from new subdivisions for the purpose of preserving farm land. Chairman Lamberson asked about keeping a portion of the subdivision open space/meadow-Mr. Minor agreed that this could be a possibility. Mr. Whitney suggested that such land could be kept for a community garden for that subdivision. Mr. Minor asked if there is anything else such as a 'Right to Farm' clause that could be included in zoning regulations. Mr. Minor will review publications that he has collected to see if it would work for Cromwell. Chairman Lamberson asked if a few more ideas should be formulated to find out if they are viable suggestions. Mr. Minor will draft the suggestions made thus far and send it out to commissioners before the next meeting so that notes can be made. Mr. Whitney asked about a booklet that listed sources that supported farmers that was dropped off in the Developmental Services mailbox. It was produced by UCONN. Mr. Minor will check their website to see if it is available for download. Through a grant it will be maintained by UCONN also.

Farmer's market-some people were interested in having a farmers market. Mr. Whitney explained that the farmers need to plan far in advance so that a commitment can be made.

Riverport Fest. Re-Cap-Chairman Lamberson said it was nice to talk to people and get the word out on what the commission was trying to do. There were just handouts available. There wasn't enough to advertise-need a banner or something to promote. Some people were surprised to learn there are active farms in town. Commission members discussed events that could be held on a yearly/quarterly basis to promote farm awareness.

3. Identify farmland properties for preservation: Tabled.

6. **New Business:** Mr. Minor shared information on a grant being offered by The Rockfall Foundation. Mr. Minor stated that there is not enough time to apply this year but that he'll put it

on his calendar to be sure to apply next year.

**7. Communications:** None.

**8. Commissioners Comments:**

a. Reschedule November meeting:

Due to Veterans Day-Town Hall will be closed so the meeting needs to be rescheduled. Conservation Commission meeting will be rescheduled for Monday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

b. Discuss pending Conservation Easement site visits: Tabled.

**9. Approval of Minutes**

a. July 8, 2010: A **motion** was made by Mr. Corlis and **seconded** by Mr. Whitney to approve the minutes of July 8, 2010 and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

b. July 24, 2010: A **motion** was made by Mr. Corlis and **seconded** by Mr. Whitney to add item 9.b. July 24, 2010 to the agenda and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

A **motion** was made by Mr. Corlis and **seconded** by Mr. Whitney to approve the minutes of July 24, 2010 and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

**10. Adjourn:** A **motion** was made by Mr. Corlis and **seconded** by Mr. Whitney to adjourn at 7:45p.m. and was *unanimously approved. Motion passed.*

**Respectfully submitted,**

Catherine Potter