

**TOWN OF CROMWELL
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

FARMLAND PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

**SPECIAL MEETING
8:00 P.M. MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2008
ROOM 219 CROMWELL TOWN HALL
41 WEST STREET**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Laurene McEntire called the meeting to order at 8:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call and seating of Alternates:

Present: Laurene McEntire, Lu Landis, Scott Lamberson, Ernest Pandolfe and Joseph Corlis

Also Present: Town Planner, Craig Minor and Interim Economic Development Coordinator Anthony Price

Absent: Anthony Varricchio Jr.

A **motion** was made by Scott Lamberson, **seconded** by Lu Landis to seat Joseph Corlis as a regular member. All were in favor. *Motion Passed.*

3. Discuss Mandated Goals and Objectives:

Craig Minor Introduced Interim Economic Development Coordinator, Anthony Price. Mr. Price told the committee that farmland preservation in Cromwell will be a challenge as the Department of Agriculture has some mandates for preserving farmland and a town like Cromwell needs to grow its tax base to preserve the quality of life to the taxpayers. Farming has been part of our heritage but it hard to make it viable in today's economy. The farming community needs resources to help meet their needs.

Mr. Minor gave an overview of how the committee came about. The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) approved Cromwell's STEAP grant for the Cromwell Business Park with the condition that the Conservation Commission be designated the "Farmland Preservation Committee". As stated in the DECD "Record of Decision", the duties of the Farmland Preservation Committee are the following mandated goals and objectives listed below for discussion.

a. Study Existing Farms

A list of parcels in Cromwell designated as "farmland" by the Tax Assessor was submitted. The parcels on the Tax Assessor list are under the Public Act 490

although there may be other farms not on this list that need to be identified. Discussion took place as to the definition of a farm. Laurene McEntire asked that the committee take on the definition of a farm provided in the Connecticut General Statutes. Michael Millane (Millane Nurseries) asked if a GIS map plotting the farms in Cromwell could be made identifying the farm locations listed by the Tax Assessor to use as a tool. Craig Minor said he will talk to the Towns GIS consultant for an estimate

b. Develop a farmland preservation strategy

The Committee members discussed items such as research into any subsidies for farmers and how a town's revaluation can affect farmers. The committee will look through the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for any recommendations that are not farm friendly. Other items discussed were how parcels are assessed, developmental rights to preserve farms, property tax exemptions and to take any action to preserve farming. Members will also look at how to help farming in Cromwell by going through Town and State regulations.

c. Identify farmland properties for conservation

The committee will need the above mentioned mapping and strategies to continue this item.

d. Develop budget to cover operating as well as programmatic expenses

Craig Minor told the committee that he will need a budget to submit as the Town budget process starts after the first of the year. Items discussed for the budget included funds for a GIS mapping consultant, training and secretarial services. In addition to the administrative line items, monies to protect farms should be in a capital long range budget. These items will be discussed over the next few months. A budget can better be determined once a strategy is developed. Mr. Minor said he would go through various publications for ideas and any educational grant monies that may be available to farmers.

4. Public Comments:

Michael Millane thanked the Committee for listening to their comments throughout the meeting. Mr. Millane said the Committee had its work cut out for it. Laurene McEntire asked Mr. Millane how this committee reaches out to other farmers. Mr. Millane said the Tax Assessor "490" list is a good start and to send any information to the farmers listed. "Farmers talk to other farmers" said Mr. Millane.

5. Schedule Future meetings:

Discussion took place. The Next Farmland Preservation Committee meeting will be Monday, February 9, 2008.

The Commission will try to notify farm owners in Cromwell of the meetings through various means of communication such as mailings, phone calls, e-mails and newspaper articles. The input of the farming community and its needs is very important to the future success of this committee. This Committee needs to know

farmers issues and concerns on farm preservation.

The Conservation Commission will alternate with the Farmland Preservation Committee on a bi-monthly schedule.

The Conservation Commission will meet on the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. of the months of January, March, May, July, September and November 2009.

The Farmland Preservation Committee will meet on the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. of the months of February, April, June, August, October and December 2009.

Special meetings for both the Conservation Commission and the Farmland Preservation Committee will be scheduled when there is a need to conduct business.

6. Adjourn:

Chairman Laurene McEntire adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Janik
Clerk

12/15/2008