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Minutes
Farm Sub Committee
July 21, 2009

In attendance:

Mark Fey, Chair
Don Perrault
Bill Wadsworth

Staff Members in attendance:

Kathleen Eagen, Farmington Town Manager
Philip Schenck, Avon Town Manager
Joseph Swetcky, Finance Director

A. Call to Order.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:35 am.

B. Public Comments.

Hinda Fisher's comments generally reflected the history of her family farm, how it was maintained in the past, the apparent neglect of the farm by the Town, the lessee Mr. Simmons (the farmer), and her concerns that the Town should take action to improve the present conditions at the farm.

David Levin asked various questions regarding the lease agreement between the Town of Farmington and the farmer and asked if he is in compliance with the lease agreement with the Town. It was stated that the farmer is not in compliance with the Town's lease.

Jane Levin informed the Committee about her recent experience buying milk at the farm and her interaction with the farmer.

Paul Wollenberg's comments generally reflected the history of the farm and that he felt there were many opportunities for the farmer to generate income, other than milk production, which the farmer is not taking advantage of.

C. "Rules of Procedure." (attached)

The Manager reviewed the "Rules of Procedure" with the Committee. A Motion was Made (Wadsworth, Perrault) to Approve the "Rules of Procedure."

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D. Review of "Charge" and Background Information.

- 1) Town Council July 14, 2009 Resolution. (attached)

The Chairman asked comments from the Committee members. In summary, the Committee discussed the following items:

- 1) Non-compliance with the Town of Farmington's lease.
- 2) Other revenue opportunities at the farm
 - Make Yogurt/Ice-cream
 - Promote local products
 - Haying
 - Farm stand
 - Grow corn
 - House other animals
 - Sell manure
- 3) History of the farm and the history of the lease agreement with the lessee and the Town of Farmington
- 4) History of the farm and the history of the lease agreement with the lessee and the Town of Avon
- 5) Economic viability of the dairy farm
- 6) Current management practices at the farm
- 7) Update of the Town of Avon Lease
- 8) Grants applied for and grants awarded

The Committee decided that the first step would be for a "farm" expert to review the Town of Farmington's lease with the farmer to determine if the expectations of the lease are unreasonable and unattainable for the lessee.

For example:

- Is it unreasonable for the farmer to maintain a herd of 50 cows?
- Is a \$1,500 per month rental fee practical?
- Can the farm be economically viable and does the current lease enable the farmer to run and maintain a successful farm operation?
- Is more farm help needed to maintain the standards required by the Town?

Overall, the Committee felt that they needed to determine whether the Town had an economic issue or a management issue at the farm. The Town Manager stated that she would meet with a farm expert by the name of Dr. Sheila Andrew, who is the Associate Professor in the Department of Animal Science and Extension Dairy Specialist at the University of Connecticut, to review the Town of Farmington's lease.

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The Committee determined that the Manager report back to the Committee with her findings after her meeting with Dr. Andrew. The Committee also asked that the Manager contact Mr. Simmons (the farmer) and ask him to attend the next meeting so that he would have an opportunity to discuss his concerns and his business plan for the farm with the Committee.

The Committee would like the next meeting to be held in the early evening instead of the morning.

E. To Approve the Committee Meeting Schedule.

The next meeting will be scheduled after the Town Manager has an opportunity to meet with Dr. Andrew from the University of Connecticut.

F. Other Business.
None.

G. Adjournment.
The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Eagen
Town Manager