



INSTR # M2022000612
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DEBORAH SZEDEI
TOWN CLERK
EASTON, CT

Minutes
Regular Meeting of the Easton Agricultural Commission
September 14, 2022 – 7:45 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

In attendance Jean Stetz-Puchalski, Denise Hebner, Amy Wolfcafe, Matt Oricchio, Victor Alfandre

Absent: Lori Cochran Dougall

Public: Chuck Welch, 82 Tranquility Drive; John Allan 68 Tranquility Drive

1. Meeting called to order at 7:50PM.
2. Jean Stetz-Puchalski moved to approve minutes from the last general meeting with 2nd by Matt Oricchio. Motion passed unanimously.
Jean Stetz-Puchalski moved to approve minutes from special meeting on 31 August, with 2nd by Matt Oricchio. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Public Comment. Chuck Welch and Alan attended with concern over posted rev of 3440 as they were drafted prior to Slaughterhouse decision. Suggested Easton leave the zoning regulations the way they are and exclude commercial slaughtering unless a certain acreage owned; and/or define processing w/o commercial slaughtering to protect Town and the right to farm.
4. Commission discussed and took action to provide feedback to Town Land Use Director/ P & Z:
 - a. Questions requiring further consideration:
 - i. Need clarification on item one of 3440 Permitted Accessory Structures. What Commission is referenced in phrase 'structure unless specifically authorized by the Commission.' We believe there is reference earlier in document to define Commission and wondered if more clarification is needed here.
 - ii. In section 2, adding a comma after processing and placing 'excluding' in front of slaughtering in the opening paragraph will expand on the definition of processing. See further consideration to defining types of processing below.
 - iii. How can you clarify the purpose of section 2 given the recommendation of site plan as remedy to a process the farmers can go through given the slaughter of animals given the judge's ruling. Additionally, processing/slaughtering of poultry for personal consumption as defined by state regulations should not require a site plan.
 - b. Concern over rising costs to farmers with increased Town regulations impacting current and future agriculture in Easton. For instance, farmers meeting application data requirements and fees. Suggesting exploration of "no fee" applications and support for gathering and submitting cost prohibitive application data (e.g., use of aerial photos versus expensive surveys). Trends suggest that rising cost of farming in Easton, more Town regulation, and the elevated risk of farmland flipping to development are cause for concern. Cost to Easton residents is high. Loss of farmland leads to increased municipal infrastructure cost leading to higher taxes. Sale of farmland changes the character and nature of the Town, including loss of agricultural resources and cost to social and environmental benefits (e.g., locally grown and harvested agricultural products, ag services, farm experience, open

space). Recommending attention to these factors when planning for agriculture and writing Zoning regs.

- c. Ag Commission gave consideration to defining what are types of processing that should not require a site plan:
 - i. Processing that turns nonanimal products into edible products. Examples include but are not limited to jams, syrup, jellies, and wash pack station for preparation of fruits and vegetables.
 - ii. Processing that uses animals without slaughtering. Examples include but are not limited to fiber, production of honey, milking of animals for edible dairy products and nonedible products such as soap.
 - d. Ag Commission continues to partner with Mark Cooper, Director of Health, regarding food processing guidelines to help farmers and those interested and/or involved in processing to better understand the role Health Dept plays in the processing of food. These resources, and other relating to agriculture, have been posted on the Ag Com portal of the Town Website.
- 5. Correspondence: Mark Cooper, Health Dept on Food Processing; Drought relief for farmers; Justin Giordano, legal notices relating to slaughterhouse decision & P & Z Zoning reg revisions
 - 6. New Business. Drawing attention to agricultural resources to educate town residents, boards/committees/commissions, and invite participation from farming community remains important. Ideas to be discussed at October meeting.
 - 7. Jean Stetz-Puchalski moved to adjourn meeting at 9:08 and Victor Alfandre second – motion passed unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Denise Hebner, Recording Secretary *Denise Hebner*

Memo

To: Justin Giordano, Town Land Use Director/P & Z
Karen Velky, Town of Easton Land Use/P & Z

From: Easton Agricultural Commission

Date: September 14, 2022

Re: Feedback as requested from the Town Land Use Director /P & Z regarding revisions to 3440 Permitted Accessory Structures post Court decision

At the September 14, 2022, regular meeting of the Agricultural Commission, following feedback was offered to Town Land Use Director/ P & Z regarding 3440 Permitted Accessory Structures post:

- a. Questions requiring further consideration:
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We appreciate the opportunity to comment on these revisions. If there are subsistent revisions, we recommend the Ag Commission have the opportunity to review and provide feedback.