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Mary A. Bray
MARY A. BRAY
TOWN CLERK

Colchester Agriculture Commission
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, March 19, 2012 - 6:00 P.M.
Town Hall, Room 3

Attending: L.Curtis, E.Gillman, A.Lyons, A.Savitsky, J.Savitsky, D.Wasniewski

Absent: J.Becker

Liaisons attending: S.Soby (Board of Selectmen); C.Bourque (New London County Farm Bureau); A.Turner (Town Planner)

Also attending were K.Hughes and T.Migliaccio (students at Bacon Academy); R.Blessing (of the Norwich Bulletin); J.Cameron; K.Przekopski; D.Wray; C.Kaeser.

1. Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order by Chairman E.Gillman at 6:01 P.M.

2. Chairman's Report to Commission:

E.Gillman reported that the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance would meet tonight at 7:00 P.M. to discuss various proposals for bonding in the upcoming budget. Part of this agenda involves the stated intent of the town to purchase the 75.9 acre Slembeck farm on Prospect Hill Road for price of \$540,000 which has been previously negotiated between the Town and the seller. (Bonding could possibly be as much as \$615,000 for this purchase since there is a \$75,000 cost associated with issuance of each bond by the town, but it could be bundled together with other bond issues and the overhead cost of bonding shared among several projects.) She read a draft of a memorandum from A.Turner dated March 19, 2012 and this document will be appended as part of these minutes.

She also reported that earlier in the afternoon she had met with Town Planner A.Turner to discuss the future involvement of the Agriculture Commission in deliberations regarding this property if the voters in town approve the bonding for this and the plan goes forward as hoped.

Also she noted that there has been a communication from the CT Department of Agriculture announcing that the Town of Colchester has been awarded a state grant of \$17,300 for a project to evaluate the Cost of Community Services for the Town of Colchester to be performed by consultant Paula Stahl. The Town will also be contributing a value of \$17,678 in matching services for a total project value of \$34,978. This study is expected to be completed in approximately six months.

3. Discussion on the possible purchase of the Slembeck farm by the Town of Colchester:

There was a lengthy discussion of the possible purchase of this farm involving many members of the Commission, Liaison reps, and attendees of meeting. The concensus was that

this purchase is a highly desirable goal for the Town and that it is very important to do it correctly to assure the parcel's future as working farmland. Many options for preservation are possible and the Town Planner said that right now this whole project is a work in progress. He assured this Commission that it would be very much involved in any future decisions regarding this property if voters ultimately approve the bonding for purchase and the town actually takes title to it. It was stated that once the parcel is acquired, the Town intends to put appropriate conservation easements on the property as soon as possible to assure that its usage for agricultural purposes will be protected in perpetuity.

MOTION made by L.Curtis:

“That the Agriculture Commission endorse the Town's pursuit of purchase of the 75.9 acre Slembeck farm for the ultimate purpose of having the land remain in agricultural usage and preservation.”

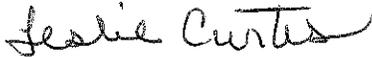
Seconded by A.Savitsky.

Voted on; UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

4. Adjournment:

A.Savitsky moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:46. D.Wasniewski seconded. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Leslie Curtis
Secretary

To: Elizabeth Gillman, Chairman, Colchester Agriculture Advisory Committee

From: Adam Turner

Re: Slembeck Farm parcel

Date: March 19, 2012

MEMORANDUM (draft)

The Town is seeking to purchase a 75.59 acre parcel on 110 Prospect Hill Road. The property contains a residential structure and two active farm fields of roughly 25 acres. The residential structure is 2,706 sq feet in size and was originally built in the 1920's, was substantially renovated in 1981 and was again substantially restored over the last 24 months. There is an agriculture building (barn) on the property and a maintenance shed.

The property is adjacent to several large undeveloped tracts of land including the Colchester Fish and Game Club property and the One Way Realty piece (105 AC) which will likely be preserved for conservation use. The proposed sale scores highly on the Connecticut Farmland Trust scoring system as well as the Towns open space method.

The parcel would be purchased for \$540,000. The Town will seek to ensure that the land is actively farmed. There are several other programs that the town might utilize to recoup funds for this purchase including the sale of the residential property, and State funding for open space or agriculture land purchase as DEEP has commenced funding rounds for such purchases. Funds gotten from State open space purchases must be used on the property for which the funds were secured meaning that if State funds were received for this parcel they would be used to retire the bonded amount.

There are several steps remaining for purchase. Tonight the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance will debate whether this purchase should be included in the possible Bond issue tentatively scheduled for May. If the item is included it would have to be approved at a Town meeting scheduled for April and then approved by voters at a referendum tentatively scheduled in May.

The Town is developing a full purchase report which is just beginning to be completed. It will include:

1. Completion of the purchase agreement
2. Appraisal of the property
3. Inspection of the property
4. Development of the farm management plan
5. Development of financing package