

AGRICULTURE COMMISSION

October 15, 2012 - 7:00PM
Colchester Town Hall
Room 3

MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to order
2. Additions and/or changes to the Agenda
3. Approve Minutes of the September 17, 2012 Agriculture Commission Meeting
4. Citizens comments
5. Chair report
6. Old business
 - a. Update from Town Planner concerning the Slembeck Farm.
 - b. Update on Town's adoption of regulations suggested in "Guidance & Recommendations for CT Municipal Zoning Regs and Ordinances for Livestock."
 - c. Discussion and possible action on the formation of a local CERT training for response for livestock emergencies.
 - d. Discussion and possible action on finalizing the Agriculture Commission Bylaws.
 - e. Discussion and possible action on future expansion of the Colchester Farmers Market.
 - f. Discussion and possible action on providing community education towards fostering agricultural/farm awareness.
 - g. Any other old business deemed necessary.
7. New business
 - a. Any other new business deemed necessary.
8. Adjournment

Attachment: Agriculture Commission Action Items Still Pending as of October 15, 2012

Agriculture Commission Action Items Still Pending as of October 15, 2012

Bracketed numbers refer to minutes [yymmdd paragraph] when items were last discussed

1. Bylaws draft needs discussion and approval [120917 5b].
2. Liz to contact towns of Guilford, Thompson and Sterling about their procedures for handling farmers' or citizens' concerns and complaints [120521 6c(2)].
3. Change in 490A acreage requirements [120521 6c(3)].
4. For zoning and tax purposes, broaden right to farm policy to allow farms by right to engage in business activities that are not traditional farming but are related to or consistent with farming [120416 6c].
5. Investigate the tax rates for the 490 program with the goal of adhering to the current CT Dept of Agriculture guidelines for valuations of all farmland in town [120416 6c].
6. Authorize additional tax exemptions that the state allows for farm machinery (beyond the original \$100,000 exemptions), farm buildings and extra property tax abatements on certain types of farms [120416 6c].
7. Involve the Colchester school system in farm awareness programs as a means of stemming future problems as well as educate local students about the role of Colchester's farms in food production and their community [120917 5c].
8. Make it easier for farmers to obtain and maintain (with a sense of security) the agricultural tax status 490A and 490 [120416 6c].
9. Revisit Farmland Ranking Criteria to assign weights to each factor [120521 6a].
10. Work with Planner to compile a complete inventory and ranking of all Colchester farmlands [120416 6a].
11. Recommendations to P&Z concerning zoning regulations and ordinances for livestock in the town of Colchester [120820 6c].
12. Resolve issues concerning the future expansion of the Colchester Farmers Market [120820 7a].
13. Train and establish a CERT team to assist law enforcement and emergency teams with events involving escaped livestock and other large animal emergencies [120917 4b].