

**Residential Project meeting
October 3, 2011**

Members Present: Michael Hingston, Judith Esmay, Kate Connolly, Bill Dietrich, Joan Garipay

Public Present: Jim Kennedy, Dave Cioffi

Staff Present: Judith Brotman

Minutes of September 26, 2011

The minutes of September 26, 2011 were reviewed and amended, Bill Dietrich made a motion to approve the minutes. Kate Connolly seconded the motion. The amended minutes were approved unanimously.

Continued Discussion about Rural Land Use: Agriculture & Forestry

The committee agreed that major issues and/or concerns about agriculture & forestry are: Noise, Odor, Traffic & Parking, Encounters with Animals and Public Health & Safety.

Michael distributed 2 handouts he had drawn up intended to summarize the previous week's discussion. The first handout categorized potential adverse impacts and specific activities that might cause them. The second handout summarized the broader discussion of the previous week. The committee discussed whether activities conducted for profit necessarily have adverse impacts. The nature and size of the impact is important. Whether an activity is conducted for sale or conducted for personal use is less important than whether it is adversely affecting neighbors.

The committee agreed that the scale of the proposed activity matters. Dividing the topic into two scales was proposed to simplify the discussion. The separation proposed is small- those related to a primary residential activity and large- those conducted as a dominant activity. . "Gardening" (residential activities which equate with the small scale activity) vs. Agriculture" (rural "farming" activity which equates with the large scale activity).

The committee agreed that the "In Town" and "Rural" are two different areas, where impacts, scale, and size of activities and neighbor's expectations vary. Concerns are the same, but vary in degree because of the proximity of neighbors: traffic, noise, odors, visual, water quality. Kate was complimentary and supportive of Jim Kennedy's ideas for in-town agriculture.

Jim Kennedy referenced his simplified definition of agriculture. The committee focused the discussion of the proposed definition of agriculture on the use and activity being permitted, the what and how of the activity, rather than the why the activity is done (i.e. for sale, for profit, for personal use). The suggestion was made to add the phrase "...all activities and operations of a farm, including: [and list the known permissible activities]... to the present definition. In other words, what do we want to control (the adverse impact issues) and how do we want to control it – through zoning, through licensing, through other measures? No decision was made other than a general consensus that "gainful business" is not a useful part of the definition.

Noise is a particularly difficult impact to regulate – there is noise from a farm operation (mowing, haying, seeding, furrowing, etc.) and from forestry operations (logging, timbering, sawing, etc.)

Large scale farming requires more land, with issues of controlling the noise, the use of pesticides, etc. Plant farming should be allowed in the rural area. Animal farming is a different issue, and will need to be assessed separately from plant farming. Size, number and type of animals are important in determining their potential adverse effects. Care needs to be exercised on small lots in both in-town residential areas and on small subdivision-created lots in the present rural zone. The suggestion was made that there should be 3 areas with respect to agriculture/farming: Urban, Suburban and Rural. The size of the lot, the proximity of neighbors, and neighbor's expectations should all be considered in identifying these 3 areas. The size and the scale of the activity, as well as the lot size and land configuration are important in determining the appropriateness of the activity.

In summary, the committee agreed:

- Agriculture/farming is can be a small, medium or large scale activity;
- Three zones are appropriate – urban, suburban and rural;
- Separate the issues of Animal uses and Plant uses;
- Commercial aspects are a separate issue;
- Agriculture should be encouraged in the rural areas
- Forestry has its own set of issues

Next meeting is Monday, October 10th – the agenda is as yet unknown!

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith Lee Shelnuttt Brotman, scribe