

Lebanon Conservation and Agriculture Commission
Regular Meeting, 6/1/15
Minutes

Call to order, 4:30 p.m., by Marc Lang.

Members present: Marc Lang, Keith Laporte, Jan Fitter, Howard Wayland , Alton Blodgett, Oliver Manning, Emery Gluck

Member absent: Paul Trubey, Jon Slate, Toni Willard, Alyna Stober

Also present: Town Planner Phil Chester, Bill Ingalls, Mark Reynolds, Christian Joseph and Ray Defeao (sp?) of Pride's

Oliver appointed acting alternate

Mark attended to urge the commission to advocate for the Town's adoption of an ordinance to exempt farm buildings from real estate taxes per CGS Sec. 12-91(c). He submitted a memo in support of such action (dated 6/1/15, hard copy to file).

Commission's discussion: Consensus that Lebanon's small farmers carry a heavy property tax burden, increased by the recent revaluation, and that such an ordinance would be "farm-friendly" for them. However, it was noted that for purposes of this legislation, Lebanon is unusual in having three "corporate" agricultural entities that account for a huge portion of the Town's tax revenues. Such an ordinance would mean shifting a lot of this tax burden onto the bulk of townspeople. It was suggested that the legislation is thereby unsuitable for Lebanon's purposes and that a change at the legislative level would be needed. We would also need to know how much tax revenue would have to be shifted. Phil will research both questions. The issue is tabled pending additional information.

Christian explained that the window for sampling is April to September and that there is no fourth quarter sampling largely because of dangerous conditions. The next sampling report will be in September.

Christian and Ray, who is designing Pride's landscaping upgrade, discussed their plans for the home office area and declared Pride's intention also to eventually landscape to reduce the intrusiveness of their operations on the roadside ambience on Goshen Hill Road and on both sides at New Lebanon Cemetery. Some confusion was apparent about the current plan vis-à-vis what was agreed on with the Planning Zoning Commission. Pride's will submit a plan for the home office area to Brandon Handfield within two weeks (that is, by 6/15/15).

Property 15-A was rated and received a score of 12 with the following comment included in the rating: The pleasant ambience of this dirt road, with no residential development on nearly all of one side, and the spectacular white pine stand directly across the road from the property, were noted as worthy of consideration.

Motion (JF) to recommend to the BoS that they authorize an appraisal for property 15-A; seconded and passed unanimously.

Motion (ML) to adjourn at 6:03 p.m.; seconded (KL) and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Fitter, Sec'y