



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Agricultural Commission Meeting Minutes

Chairman
Bruce Garstka

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex-Hybrid Format

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Marelli called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present Alternate Member- Community-at-Large William Thorne
 Farming Community Allyson Angelini
 Chairman-Farming Community Bruce Garstka
 Alternate Member Steve Martic

Excused Community-at-Large Representative Michael E. Marelli
 Community-at-Large Representative Katie Yuhas
 Farming Community Russell Holmberg

Also in attendance:
 Juliet Hodge, Planning Director
 Dave Holdridge, Conservation Commission member
 John Vincent, Chairman EDC
 Naomi Rodriguez, Town Council
 Mary McGrattan, Town Council
 Gary Paul, Town Council (via Zoom)
 Karen Parkinson, resident
 Keith Parkinson, resident
 Jessica Cobb, resident

III. JOINT DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE LAND USE DEPARTMENT (PLANNING & ZONING) AS WELL AS THE PLANNING & ZONING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INLAND WETLANDS/ WATERCOURSES AND CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS

1. Agricultural Commission Joint Work Session

GIS Layer for 25+ parcels were sent to several individuals to be verified. Mr. Thorne suggested adding it to the PA-490 list, which is planned.

Chairman Garstka met with members of CT Farmland Preservation about purchasing farm rights and noted that most Ledyard soils are not prime farmland and equestrian grazing does not make it a priority. Deed restrictions on properties can help limit land use.

The Commission discussed the potential use of Clarke Farm and the 42 acres of open space across from Preston Park. Administrative control is with the Town Council. Suggestions were made to develop community gardens. There is an area at Clarke Farm being considered for historical preservation. There are plans to mow the property this season to reduce invasives.

The Commission discussed the 200+ acre Pfizer property on 214 for future school and municipal use. The tax revenue for the parcel is low (under \$7,000). 154 Stoddards Wharf Rd is also a larger parcel also for sale; the town has a right of way there. The Mayor has spoken with the sellers, as has Avalonia.

Mr. Holdridge reported that the Conservation Commission is trying to be proactive about the interconnectedness of greenways, open spaces, and trails. They would like to build a network of trails that connects to athletic fields using state grants to purchase open space. Chairman Garstka hopes that the new GIS overlays will assist with this goal.

The Conservation Commission would like to be notified of subdivision applications for open space preservation. They are working to identify parcels appropriate for town acquisition as funds allow.

Mr. Thorne asked about the pressure for developing housing, in particular low-income housing, and how that builds pressure on open land, particularly with Electric Boat and Foxwoods planning for massive hiring within the next few years. There are not currently a lot of applications for Accessory Dwelling Units.

The new subdivision regulations were adopted last month and will be effective April 1, 2023, which will hopefully force a better design. The definition of buildable land is better defined with minimum lot size, contiguous lots, and improved density.

Ms. Jessica Cobb is the GIS coordinator and is working on a regional GIS data hub that will show all the open spaces: recreational and conservation. The goal is also interconnectedness. The hope is to launch over the summer and do outreach at farmers' markets and other public events.

Mr. Gary Paul expressed gratitude for updated subdivision regulations to help protect more land as well as for economic development.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

IV. CITIZENS COMMENTS

None.

V. COMMENTS OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

None.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

VII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 1. Motion to APPROVE Regular Meeting Minutes from February 21, 2023

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: William Thorne

SECONDER: Steve Martic

AYE 4 Thorne Angelini Garstka Martic

EXCUSED 3 Marelli Yuhas Holmberg

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- 1. Any Other Old Business to come before the Commission

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Any Other New Business to come before the Commission

Mr. Thorne asked about approaching farmers who aren't interested in selling their land but might be interested in placing a deed restriction on their land. The Commission would want to be intentional about setting things up for larger parcels to be divided into smaller farms. Discussion was had about developing a specific zone for farms. Councilor Rodriguez said that the property is being held by the Town for any potential future need. If a farmer was interested in leasing a parcel for agriculture, they would write a letter to Land Use and it would be addressed by the Town Council. Councilor Rodriguez suggested the Commission write a letter and attend the upcoming Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee meeting.

Councilor Rodriguez read a letter from Ms. Jessica Cobb that asked how land for open space was allocated for use.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to ADJOURN the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Bruce Garstka

SECONDER: William Thorne

AYE 4 Thorne Angelini Garstka Martic

EXCUSED 3 Marelli Yuhas Holmberg

DISCLAIMER: Although we try to be timely and accurate these are not official records of the Town.

