

APPROVED 10.19.2021

**Minutes of the Topsfield Agricultural Commission
Virtual over ZOOM
July 20, 2021**

Board members present via teleconference: Martha Morrison, Greg Mellinger, Megan Brown, Stacey Apple, Kindra Clineff, and Nora Neale. Lynne Bermudez, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen was also in attendance.

Lynne Bermudez read the following announcement:

“Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish to watch or listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: Video conference (see log-in information below.) No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Topsfield website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting. The meeting is being recorded via ZOOM. Is there anyone else present who wishes to record the meeting?”

She then opened the meeting at 6:30.

In that this was the first meeting of the newly appointed Agricultural Commission, the board was organized as follows.

Martha Morrison was elected as Chairman, Greg Mellinger as Vice Chairman and Megan Brown as Clerk.

A discussion about the mission of the Agricultural Commission focused on its role in preserving and promoting agricultural activities in Topsfield. Ideas included education and activities in the schools, including Masco and Essex Tech, food supply, fundraisers and community outreach, inventories of farmers (both residents and non-residents) who farm land in Topsfield, public outreach, collaboration with groups such as beekeepers and the Topsfield Community Partnership, mediating between farmers and residents, and helping farmers network.

Members reviewed relevant State statutes and local bylaws and determined that the Commission’s first order of business is to create a work plan. Greg Mellinger volunteered to manage the process of establishing the Commission’s goals and objectives. The Taunton Agricultural Commission’s was mentioned as a possible model.

The topic of tree farms and Town tree replacement policies was also discussed briefly.

Topsfield’s first Tomato Festival was announced to be held on September 12th on the Proctor School grounds. Stacey was scheduled to be a tomato judge, and other members of the Commission were to be involved in various capacities.

The meeting adjourned at 7:42.