

**MINUTES
ROCKINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION**

**March 9, 2016
Stratham Municipal Center, Stratham, NH**

Commissioners: P. Wilson, Chairman (North Hampton); P. Coffin, G. Coppelman (Kingston); L. Plumer (Exeter); P. Winslow (Rye); L. Cushman (Stratham); J. Foley (Epping); D. Marshall (Fremont); S. Gerrato (Greenland); M. McAndrew (New Castle); D. Hawkins (Seabrook); P. Merrill, J. Whitney (Kensington); K. Woolhouse, G. English, D. Clement (Exeter); M. Traeger (Sandown); T. Moore (Plaistow); B. Kravitz (Hampton)

Guests: L. Merrill (NH Dept of Agriculture); P. Deschaine (Town Administrator-Stratham); Amy Manzelli, Esq. (BCM Env. & Land Law PLLC-speaker); J. Hutton (Coppal House Farm-speaker); Carol Hutton (Coppal House Farm); M. Olsen (Hampton PB); P. Elwell (Stratham Conservation Comm); T. Matterg (UNH); C. Croteau (Kingston); T. & N. McElroy (Newton Greenhouse); K. Scamman (Scamman Farm, Stratham); L. Wilson (No Hampton)

Staff: C. Sinnott (Executive Director); G. Greenwood (Assistant Director); R. Pruyne (GIS Specialist); A. Pettengill (Business Manager)

I. **Call to Order:** Wilson convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and thanked the Town of Stratham and Paul Deschaine for hosting the meeting and thanked all in attendance. Deschaine also thanked everyone for attending. Introductions were made around the room.

II. **Minutes February 11, 2016**

Coppelman moved to approve the Minutes of February 11, 2016 as presented; Gerrato seconded. SO VOTED. (3 abstentions)

III. **Current Planning Issues Part 2: Letting Agriculture Work in Your Community**

Wilson introduced Amy Manzelli, Esq, and reviewed her expertise and accomplishments. Manzelli began with the legal framework governing community agriculture and definitions of several RSAs. She related how each RSA interacts with local agriculture, good or bad. She also described the NH Dept of Agriculture's role and reviewed the definition and differences of Agritourism and Agriculture, and municipality rights and responsibilities under the law.

Greenwood introduced members of the Panel: Lorraine Merrill, Commissioner Dept of Agriculture; J. Hutton, former Planning Board Chairman and owner of Coppal House Farm; Glenn Coppelman, the NHARPC representative on the Legislative Agritourism Working Group, Planning

Board member of Kingston, and Christmas Tree farmer; Glenn Greenwood, Assistant Director and Sr. Land Use Planner, RPC

Merrill began with her presentation with statistics on farming and agriculture in NH, noting that although there was a decrease in farming nationwide, NH 2012 Agriculture census shows a 5% increase in New Hampshire. NH is also #1 in the nation for direct marketing sales as a percentage of all farm sales. She explained that NH agriculture is diversified and dynamic and there is a large number of small farms here who sell directly through farmers markets and other local venues. Dairy and ornamental horticulture are NH's top industry segments. She reviewed the growth of agritourism in NH and how farmers here have to deal with the many federal and state regulations.

John Hutton, owner of Coppal Farm in Lee and a member of the Lee Zoning Board and Adhoc Committee, explained that his farm is approximately 200 acres and is a mixed power farm, with both tractors and horses. He has diversified his farm with corn crops, hogs, sheep, horses, corn mazes, sleigh rides, farm stand and sunflower crop which produces sunflower oil. He was the first farm in NH to receive the Good Food Award, as a result of his sunflower oil. He also spoke to the need of farmers to be involved in their town government.

Glenn Coppelman explained he was a member on behalf of NHARPC of Senate Committee Working Group that worked with Sen. Boutin to develop language for Senate Bill 345 aimed at adding agritourism into the Agriculture Statute. He spoke about the Bill being proactive toward agritourism and giving municipalities a say in the site planning in the permitting process for agritourism operations.

Glenn Greenwood described his foibles regarding farming as a young land use planner in NH. Among other things he learned that you need to talk to farmers and towns need to advocate for their farming community. He also supports towns forming agriculture commissions and incorporating flexibility into their ordinances where farming is concerned.

A question and answer period followed. Chairman Wilson thanked the Panel and stated there would be a short intermission.

IV. RPC's GIS Standard Map Set, Rob Pruyne, GIS Specialist

Pruyne referred to Attachment 2 and stated the RPC has new and expanded standard map sets for communities. These maps are tools for land use boards and are the most commonly requested maps. He explained there are some new things with this iteration: all communities will be available at once, most of the data is updated, and they will be available on the new RPC website. He noted that maps will be in 11x17 format and D size prints will be "by request only". He asked that any mistakes or problems viewing them or with the data, be sent to him. The FEMA flood maps are not final yet, but the zoning maps are as updated as possible (some towns did not respond to request for updates). Discussion followed on what the maps are routinely used for now and what may be available in the future.

V. Commissioner Roundtable – Postponed

VI. Other Business

- A. Solicitation for FY 17 Nominating & Executive Committee positions: Please see the Chairman or Sinnott if you wish to volunteer for a position on either Committee;
- B. Strategic Planning Update: Sinnott gave a brief explanation of the RPC's need to look for long term strategies in the changing funding landscape. This topic will be addressed in depth at the May Executive Committee meeting.
- C. MPO Meeting April 13th: North Hampton
- D. RPC Meeting Schedule update: see Attachment 3

Wilson thanked Cushman for the homemade cookies.

VII. Public Comment: None

VIII. Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Pettengill, RPC Business manager
Recording Secretary