

**Town of Brattleboro**  
**Agricultural Advisory Committee Minutes**  
**Wednesday, February 19, 2014**

Committee Members Present: Jay Bailey, Charlie Robb, Jr., Caitlin Burlett, Nancy Miller, Stu Thurber, Dean Hamilton  
Public: Tad Montgomery  
Staff: Sue Fillion

**A. Call to Order**

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J. Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM

**B. Announcements**

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No announcements.

**C. Approval of Minutes**

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C. Burlett moved approval and of the November 20, 2013 minutes as written. C. Robb, Jr. seconded the motion.

**D. New Business**

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1. Agricultural Land Protection Fund

S. Fillion advised that the Selectboard has warned an article for Representative Town Meeting that would essentially defund the Agricultural Land Protection Fund. The article proposes taking \$50,000 to establish an Energy Efficiency Fund and using the remaining to offset FY15 taxes. J. Bailey recalled that when committee members were before the Selectboard in December 2013, they were asked their feelings on alternative uses of the funding. He stated that there were a variety of individual responses. This meeting was a chance for the Committee to discuss it and take a formal position.

T. Montgomery stated that he was a member of the Energy Committee. He advised that the proposed Energy Efficiency Fund is to fund energy audits of municipal buildings. Extra money in the fund could be used to fund projects identified in the audit's scope of work.

*Motion:* S. Thurber moved a motion to keep \$50,000 in the Agricultural Land Protection Fun. N. Miller seconded the motion.

*Discussion:* S. Thurber acknowledged that there are other sources of funds for land purchase. N. Miller stated that this funds are a bridge and are important. She would like all the money to remain in the fund. D. Hamilton said that it would be a shame to raid the fund for such an insignificant tax impact. C. Burlett advised that there are young farmers looking for land but can't afford it. She could support giving up the interest but doesn't support taking all of the funds out it. She said that the original \$50,000 was a substantial commitment from the town and that funding doesn't go as far as it would have back in the 1980's. C. Robb, Jr. said that the town has always supported the farmers and he would be okay with giving up the interest. C. Burlett said that it is her preference that all the money remain in the fund but felt strongly that if money is taken from the fund that it not be for one fiscal year. The intent of the fund was for long term impact and interest of the town. J. Bailey said that the motion could be amended to clarify that if money is to be taken from the fund that it be used for the long term benefit of the town such as energy audits that will pay back the town in the long term.

*Motion to Amend:* C. Burlett amended the original motion as follows:

To recommends that the original contribution of \$50,000 be retained in the Agricultural Land Protection Fund and the remaining interested accrued in the fund be used for project with long term benefit to the town such as the Energy Efficiency Fund.

D. Hamilton seconded the motion.

*Vote on Amendment:* 4-1-1 (J. Bailey abstained, N. Miller opposed)

N. Miller stated that she didn't feel that it was the purview of this committee to make a recommendation on how the money be used if it is taken from the Ag. Land Protection Fund. She felt that including the Energy Efficiency Fund could present a diversion from the issue that the Ag. Committee's position that they want money to remain in the fund. After discussion it was agreed to make it clear that the Agricultural Committee wants all the money to stay in the fund.

*Vote on the following Motion:*

To recommend that the entire amount be kept in the Agricultural Land Protection Fund. If the Reps decided otherwise, they recommend that the original funding of \$50,000 be retained in the fund and that the accrued interest be used for project with long term benefit to the town such as an Energy Efficiency Fund.

*Vote:* 5-0 (J. Bailey did not vote as he was chairing)

There was a brief discussion of how to move forward. C. Burlett will pull together some information to justify the fund. S. Fillion offered assistance if needed. The Committee agreed to meet on Wednesday, March 12 at 7:00 PM.

2. Draft Subdivision Regulations presentation  
Postponed to the next meeting.

3. Election of Officers  
J. Bailey noted that the Committee needed to elect officers.

N. Miller nominated Jay Bailey as Chair. He accepted the nomination. Elected 5-0

C. Robb, Jr. nominated Stu Thurber as Vice-Chair. He accepted the nomination. Elected 5-0

4. Other  
Tad Montgomery advised that he is working on community solar project and is looking for large pieces of land that can be rented. He is interested in combining agricultural (grazing, row crops) with the solar project. They are looking for either one or 3 ½ acres. It must be within 1/3 mile of good power – 1 acre does not have to be 3-phase. They are looking for marginal land (not rich loam or prime agricultural soils).

## **E. Adjourn**

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The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM on a motion by N. Miller that was seconded by C. Burlett.