

Animal Welfare Committee Meeting October 23, 2014, 10-00am, COA at VMCC

Attending were MacDonald, Brec, Murphy, Brooke. Excused, O'Neil.

Ruth Ann Cowing, ACO

Public: Pat Franzese, Candace Nagle, Elizabeth C. Brooke, Marsha Sirota

Public Comments:

Pat Franzese thanked all who did due diligence since the prior meeting. Ken Apert was instructed to take his rabbits off the premises as it was an alleged zoning violation. Pat called Ted Malone who told her she should have come to him first. She also spoke with Mike Cahill, MA Department of Agricultural Resources, Division of Animal Health, who sent her a blank copy of the MA Annual Livestock Inspection Form. The Farm property was last inspected in 2008. She suggested that public pressure be put on Ken via Facebook. Also suggested that MSPCA make another visit. Questioned if help was available from the Animal Rescue League. Suggested all AWC members call the MSPCA.

Candace Nagle thanked Pat. She thinks the AWC should draft an Article to be presented at Town Meeting, using the Animal Welfare Approved standards as a guideline, to establish a humane livestock by-law. Believes the zoning by-law needs to be enforced via fines, and suggested the AWC draft a letter to have the by-law enforced. Also continue to offer buying the rabbits.

Public Comments Portion Closed

1. Approval of the minutes was waived until the next meeting, as they were not available.
2. Rabbit Farm: Ruth Ann was included in an email from Ken stating that he wants to keep the Angora rabbits at the farm. He shears and does not pluck. She will instruct him to take any matted rabbits to the vet. The rabbits in the lower cages do not get light, however the cleanliness of the area has been improved.

Elizabeth and Carol met with David Gardner to address the concerns of this committee regarding the rabbit farm. He will follow-up with the Building Commissioner.

Elizabeth was concerned that if he is forced to move the rabbits, they could be moved to a worse situation. He would need to have some time to relocate and needs to be tracked. Stated that if we bought the rabbits, would need a legal agreement from him that he does not purchase more.

Ruth Ann to call the State. Does not understand why the slaughterhouse, who was not legally allowed to slaughter rabbits was not fined at the State level.

A motion was made to contact Zoning to enforce the fines.
Motion passed 4-0-0.

A motion was made to again offer to purchase the rabbits.
Motion passed 4-0-0. Carol to draft and submit.

A motion was made to review the AWI standards, and to draft an Article to be presented at Town Meeting to establish a humane raising of livestock by-law.
Motioned passed 4-0-0

3. Budget requests are to be submitted to the Selectmen by 11/12/14. Carol wants us to ask for \$341.60 to purchase 4 poop bag stations to replace 3 broken ones, and keep one in reserve.

A motion was made to submit the budget item request.
Motion passed 4-0-0. Carol to draft and submit.

4. Next meeting 11/20/14

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherry Brec
Clerk pro tempore