

**DAVIE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD**  
**MARCH 4, 2013**

**1. ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. Board members present were: Chair Dave Parrish, Vice Chair Scott Weinstein (arrived 6:36 p.m.), Julie Aitken, Sam Scott (arrived 6:50 p.m.), and Jason Hurley. Also present was Board Secretary Janet Gale recording the meeting.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 4, 2013**

Mr. Hurley made a motion, seconded by Ms. Aitken, to approve the minutes of February 4, 2013. In a voice vote, with Vice-Chair Weinstein and Dr. Scott being absent, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 3-0)**

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

**3.1 Non-Organic Fertilizers by Bayardo Herrera of Agrium Advanced Technologies**

Chair Parrish reported that Mr. Herrera had a conflict with today's meeting, and would plan on presenting this item at a later date.

**3.2 Davie Farm Guide**

Ms. Aitken provided a copy of the updated draft version of the Davie Farm Guide, which she noted had been emailed to each of the Board members. She advised that Mayor Judy Paul would write the introduction to the Guide, and Property Appraiser Lori Parrish would also provide a written segment on agricultural classifications. The Board members would provide photographs to be included as well.

Ms. Aitken asked if the new Sign Ordinance had been passed by the Town Council. Ms. Gale clarified that this Ordinance will go before the Council later in the week. Later she clarified that it was the Planning and Zoning Board meeting. Ms. Aitken stated that the new Ordinance would be included in the Farm Guide once it had passed. An opinion from the new Attorney General would also be included. The Farm Guide will begin with a listing of Town ordinances, followed by the Property Appraiser's comments and then by State statutes.

The Board members discussed the types of photographs to be included. Ms. Aitken said she could insert the photos in the Guide if the members would email them to her. This would make it easier for Town Staff to prepare the final document.

It was noted that the updated Farm Guide would be presented to Town Council for their approval before the document went to press. The Town's website would also need to be updated to include the updated version of the Guide.

The members discussed the language of the Town's new Sign Ordinance. Ms. Aitken recalled that Planning and Zoning Division Manager David Quigley had advised that this Ordinance's language would reflect the exemption of signage on non-residential farm structures from regulation at the State level.

Dr. Scott asked if a member of the Board planned to attend the Town Council meeting whenever the Sign Ordinance was presented. He felt it could be necessary to bring an agricultural point of view to the process. Ms. Aitken observed that the change to the Ordinance's language was likely to be very straightforward.

It was clarified that photographs sent by the Board members would be sent to Ms. Gale's office in jpeg form, and Ms. Gale would forward them to Ms. Aitken for inclusion in the Farm Guide in order to comply with the Sunshine Law. Any photos brought and discussed at the meeting were fine. It was the Board's consensus that photographs should represent what was going on in the Town at the present time.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **4.1 Joint Quarterly Meeting**

The Board would host the joint quarterly meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Board, Parks and Recreation Board, Open Space Board, and Green Energy Board on Monday, April 1, 2013. Vice Chair Weinstein pointed out that there was presently no initiative on which the Agricultural Advisory Board could provide an update for the other advisory bodies. Other Boards would discuss any Town initiatives on which they were working.

Vice Chair Weinstein commented that the Parks and Recreation Board could give an update on the progress of the community garden planned for Robbins Lodge. It was noted that residents had not expressed a great deal of interest in pursuing this program thus far. Dr. Scott stated that some farmers were making arrangements to farm within the private sector, and suggested that the Town might look at some of these arrangements and make adjustments accordingly, such as allowing community gardeners to sell their produce.

Vice Chair Weinstein asserted that Town lands could be used for agriculture on a larger scale than community gardening, and proposed that the Board consider how this land could be used for urban farming. Dr. Scott said the result could be a hybrid between farming and community gardening, as participants could grow two or three crops and make a small profit from their efforts.

Vice Chair Weinstein asked if it would be possible to rent Town lands to larger-scale farmers. Dr. Scott said there may be an initiative underway to relocate some individuals who had farmed on the Van Kirk property to a former coffee plantation site. Although this would not be organized by the North-South Institute, the Institute would provide technical assistance, such as bringing in experts to inform participants about fertilizer and crop care. He advised that he was not aware of who among Town Staff might be organizing this potential project.

Mr. Hurley suggested that community gardening in Davie could be an agenda item for the upcoming joint meeting. Chair Parrish proposed inviting representatives of a local nursery that was beginning hydroponic gardening so they could describe their project.

Mr. Hurley recalled that the prospective community gardening project at Robbins Lodge had included an offer by a local Eagle Scout to build boxes and benches for the garden. Vice Chair Weinstein added that he had been willing to provide soil to the community garden. It was determined that Chair Parrish would reach out to Matt Mlodzinski of Parks and Recreation for an update on the community garden. The Board would also seek more information on the gardening effort proposed for the former coffee plantation. It was determined that the next meeting or meetings would include an invitation to a Town representative to discuss both these efforts.

Dr. Scott observed that this property was much more appropriate for farming than the Van Kirk property had been, as it was less prone to flooding and it had access. He added that the North-South Institute was working with the private sector in order to accommodate farmers currently seeking locations on which to farm.

The Board discussed other individuals who could be invited to the joint meeting to provide an update on the Town's various initiatives, including Intergovernmental Affairs Manager Philip Holste, who could provide an update on the relocation of farmers from the Van Kirk property. It was determined that a member of the Board would reach out to Mr. Holste to determine whether or not an update on the urban farming initiative was available at this time. Dr. Scott recalled that the Board had made a recommendation that urban farming leases come before them in the future, as they could be helpful in avoiding any tax assessment issues such as the ones that had occurred on the Van Kirk property.

It was determined that the Town had offered the farmers previously located at the Van Kirk property the opportunity to relocate to the former coffee plantation in order to continue the urban farming initiative. This would be the basis for the update the Board would request at the upcoming joint meeting.

## **5. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Ms. Aitken referred the Board members to a document from the Town Attorney of Southwest Ranches, explaining that a local bill had been introduced that would allow Southwest Ranches to opt out of the Right to Farm Act, as well as other exemptions for farms. Several individuals had attended the meeting at which the local bill was discussed in order to make their opposition to the proposal heard. Three members of the Broward County delegation had been in attendance. Ms. Aitken pointed out that Florida Statute 604.50, which Southwest Ranches had wished to opt out of, was not a new Statute, but a clarification of what has always been part of the law; in addition, 604.50 was also part of the Florida Building Code. She asserted that if this bill was approved, it would establish a dangerous precedent by which other communities might also seek to opt out of State law and regulate farms.

Vice Chair Weinstein commented that there seemed to be a misunderstanding of what Southwest Ranches had wished to do, as some residents felt the bill referred to regulating some farmers who did not follow safe management practices by placing compost too close to drainage areas. He noted that this practice is already not allowed by the town of Southwest Ranches, and should be implemented and enforced. Ms. Aitken added that the Right to Farm Act does not protect excessive uses, such as compost placement or burning without a permit. The exemption from agricultural regulation also does not apply to activities on a farm that are not agricultural uses.

The Board agreed that if the local bill passes, it could create a harmful domino effect among other communities. Vice Chair Weinstein said he would like to learn more about the disposition of the bill, such as whether it had died at the local level or been referred to the State legislature. They agreed that this issue would appear on the next month's agenda for an update and further discussion.

Ms. Aitken commented that the issue in Southwest Ranches appeared to be that farms were often side-by-side with residential areas, which was what had led to the creation of the Right to Farm Act. She stated that residences built in close proximity to farms did not have a right to object to the operation of the farms.

Chair Parrish said he understood that the Mayor and some Council members of Southwest Ranches were in favor of opting out of State law and allowing regulation of farms. Ms. Aitken said the Board had helped create some of the language used by Davie Code Enforcement in the past in order to ensure that a few "bad apples" did not harm the overall perception of agriculture by Town residents. This had included defining agricultural ventures such as nurseries, landscape maintenance companies, and other forms of agriculture, so Code Enforcement would be able to regulate those activities that were not agricultural in nature.

It was determined that the next month's agenda items would include further discussion of the farm guide, including pictures; moving urban farmers to the coffee plantation; and the status of the Southwest Ranches proposed local bill. It was also noted that if Mr. Holste attended the meeting, he would be given the first place on the agenda so he would not have to be present for the entire meeting.

**6. COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS**

There were no comments and/or suggestions made.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business and no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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Chair/Board Member