

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources

251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114
617-626-1700 fax: 617-626-1850 www.mass.gov/agr



CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lt. Governor

KATHLEEN A. THEOHARIDES
Secretary

JOHN LEBEAUX
Commissioner

AGRICULTURAL LANDS PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

**Monday, September 21, 2020
10:00 AM to 12:30 PM**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87214012317?pwd=enZOeFdtcmFhZzJyY0VtbTZ4ZUFVZz09>

Meeting ID: 872 1401 2317 Passcode: 9bvMdd
Dial by your location: +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 872 1401 2317 Passcode: 496858

MEETING AGENDA

- I. **UPDATE:** Department Updates
- II. **VOTE:** Approval of Minutes from July 21, 2020
- III. **UPDATE:** APR Program
- IV. **VOTES OF INTEREST/
NO INTEREST**
 - a) Adams – Westfield
 - b) Panish – Hadley
 - c) Allen – Sheffield
 - d) Olesiuk – South Hadley
 - e) West – Hadley
 - f) Howard – West Bridgewater
 - g) Machowski – Chicopee
 - h) Lindquist/Maloney – Upton
 - i) Lauzier – South Hadley
 - j) Eisenberg – West Stockbridge
 - k) Hanson – Richmond
 - l) Hicks – Charlemont

Attachment 1: Comments from Michael Smolak, Smolak Farms, LLC, North Andover on Listening Sessions.

For information please contact Dorothy Du at: dorothy.du@mass.gov or call 617-626-1741

Attachment 1: Comments from Michael Smolak, Smolak Farms, LLC, North Andover on Listening Sessions.
(submitted as a result of poor audio quality at the March 30, 2020 ALPC Zoom Meeting)

From: farmerhms@aol.com <farmerhms@aol.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 4:45 PM
To: Kennedy, Gerard (AGR)
<gerard.kennedy@mass.gov>
Subject: AgriTourism Conference 9-21-20

Hi Gerard,

I sent some of my comments and reflected a bit more on it.

One of the points I made was the profits made on APR transfers that were not apparent and why they were as interested in the process beyond the good work that they do. In essence they hold the APR rights in the interim and they issue a tax credit to the farmer for his property. Then they sell to the state and have a substantial windfall. This was something that I was not aware of and feel that they certainly have a role to play but also would like to help preserve the farmer and not just the farm.

I also said that there might be a place for execute orders to expedite some of the issues where time was of the essence while being aware of the problems and pitfalls of precedence.

The next issue is that when an APR was transferred, that there is some sort of protocol that is followed to ensure that the farmer selling the APR rights, is made very aware of the pitfalls and opportunities presented. Almost in thinking about a lot of what if's.

Then following the transfer some sort of follow up when an APR farmer is crafting a business plan or has received monies towards that end. There have been many improvements in that direction.

The most significant comment was what I had already forwarded to you.

I also attached a conference notice that can be accesses through streaming that has as the keynote speaker the Executive Director of The Mass Office of Travel and Tourism.

Hope all is well,
Michael Smolak



**MERRIMACK VALLEY
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
Presents

**2020 AGRITOURISM CONFERENCE
WITH KEIKO MATSUDO ORRALL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -
MA OFFICE OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM**

**Monday, September 21, 2020
8:00AM - 9:15AM at**



Keiko Matsudo Orrall
Executive Director
MA Office of Travel and Tourism



Join us
outdoors under
the tent!

Complimentary
Breakfast!

315 S. Bradford St, North Andover, MA

**See firsthand where your food comes from
while learning how You, Your Employees,
and Your Family can participate in the local
operations of Agritourism!**

Thank you to our Sponsors to date: MV Chamber Means Business Program;
and Smolak Farms

For sponsorship opportunities call Michael Bevilacqua at 978-686-0900
or email: michael.bevilacqua@merrimackvalleychamber.com

**Following socially distanced outdoor guidelines
In person attendance is limited - register today!
Zoom Webinar link is available for those unable to attend**

This event is FREE, but registration is required

You may now Register for this program at www.merrimackvalleychamber.com
(978) 686-0900 Office@MerrimackValleyChamber.com

    

**H. Michael Smolak, Jr.
Smolak Farms LLC
315 South Bradford Street
North Andover, MA 01845
978-500-2019cell
smolakfarms.com
farmerhms@aol.com**

Comments about the Listening sessions on the APR Program

The most significant comment came at the session at Essex Tech. Dave Dumaresque aka Farmer Dave talked about investing in the APR property and due to the structure of how things are mandated, we are condemning the program to failure from the standpoint that investing in an APR property in terms of business development and infrastructure. Right now, the rules and regulations have you investing on property that is not APR as on an APR property there is not a clear way to recoup your investment. He gave the example of former Soviet Georgia and Moldova who have different approaches to land ownership. The net result is that Moldova has an abundance of production to the point that they export food and Georgia is buying in food as they cannot produce enough for themselves.

This fact is so unbelievably important for the continuance of the program's success and the farms solvency and I suggest that we form a task force to investigate and come up with a new approach. This would be seen as cutting edge and ahead of the curve. I am not sure what the answer is but knowing the issue is the first step in finding a solution.

I strongly suggest that both the ALPC and The Ag Board look into this approach.

Michael Smolak