

Durham Agricultural Commission

13 January 2020
Durham Police Station

Meeting Minutes

Members present: Theresa Walker (Chair), Ray LaRoche (Vice Chair), Lee Alexander, John Carroll, Bryan Cassidy, Ellen Karelitz, Dave Langley, Suzanne MacDonald, Alberto Manalo, and Dan Winans

Members absent: Dinny Waters (Town Council Rep), James Bubar (Planning Board Rep), and David Potter

Visitor: [none]

I. New Business

A. Discussion on Proposed Agricultural Zoning Amendments

Chair noted the comments received from Erick Sawtelle (Town of Lee). It was agreed that all were quite good and should be incorporated into a final draft version after the Public Hearing by the Planning Board (currently scheduled for 12 February 2020). Chair also suggested that some “key” town persons be invited to attend and speak in favor of the proposed regs.

B. Minutes of November Meeting – Approved, with a few beneficial corrections.

C. Correspondence

1 Chair received an e-mail from the Town Council Chair (Kitty Marple) about the possibility of locating a community garden at a vacant area in the Littlehale Sub-division.

2. The “Honey Bee Democracy” talk by Tom Seeley (Cornell Univ.) had to canceled.

3. Chair received a request from “Seacoast Eat Local” asking for Agcomm to submit a letter in support of HB 1638 (administration of the SNAP incentive programs). Theresa will draft a letter.

II. Old Business

A. Public Education and Outreach

1. Garden and Farm Mentors – Ellen Karelitz and Bryan Cassidy explained that two sessions of the “Winter Garden e-mail Course” have been posted.

2. Bee-Friendly Program – Lee Alexander reported that he met with Holly Philbrick at Emery Farm to discuss challenges and opportunities for increasing production to meet the demand for local honey (i.e., from Durham). He will be giving two presentations on the AgComm Bee-Friendly program to Seacoast Beekeepers Association and the UNH Retired Faculty Association.

3. Food Friendly Yards – Ellen Karelitz explained 21 persons have signed up to date. Next organizational meeting will be in March. Brian mentioned a “pruning initiative” as possible workshop. He also mentioned a possible “maple sugar sap collection” initiative as well. If so, he would post an announcement in the “Friday Update.”

4. Durham Farm Day – Scheduled for 15 August 2020. John Carroll mentioned the need to keep UNH/Cooperative Experiment Station involvement as part of their outreach effort.

B. Farmers’ Market – Chair mentioned that there was very successful Exeter Farmers Market last weekend.

D. Land Stewardship Subcommittee - John Carroll feels that goats could play an important role for fire suppression, post-Christmas tree removal, and land clearing.

- E. Community Gardens – Suzanne McDonald reported that there are two new steering committee members. The “Open the Garden” meeting is scheduled for 26 January 2020.
- F. Inventory of Farms and Gardens - Dan Winans plans to hand updated pages in May/June. Suzanne MacDonald suggested that Neighborhood Associations should be contacted.

III. Other Business

A. Reps from Durham’s farms (e.g., Emery Farm, Tecce Farm) encouraged attend/participate AgComm meetings. Perhaps as “Ex Officio” members if no vacancies.

B. Ellen mentioned about the next meeting of the “Sustainability Committee.” John Carroll is a member.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Recorded by Lee Alexander