

**Durham Agricultural Commission**  
10 January 2022  
Durham Town Hall – Downstairs Meeting Room

**Meeting Minutes - Draft**

Members present: Theresa Walker (Chair), Ray LaRoche (Vice Chair,) Paul Rasmussen (Planning Board Rep) Lee Alexander, Ellen Karelitz, Dave Langley, Alberto Manalo, Holly Philbrick, and Dan Winans  
Via Zoom: Anton Bekkerman, John Carroll, and Bryan Cassidy,  
Members absent: Jim Lawson (Town Council Rep)

**1. New Business**

A. Minutes from December Meeting – Approved with one minor correction.

B. Correspondence

Moore Field – Chair and Anton Bekkerman briefly explained the “white paper” that Anton prepared related to the misperceived issue of cow manure runoff entering the Oyster River. AgComm members felt that the explanation of BMPs was useful but will probably not satisfy some people. Anton suggested that AgComm be proactive in recommending the USDA and NRCS Best Management Practices (BMPs) be followed. Perhaps a more stringent testing program and better “messaging” about this matter is also warranted. Chair will contact Oyster River Watershed for advice. She also suggested that AgComm should coordinate with the Conservation Commission regarding the types and sources of pollutants that may be found in the Oyster River watershed. It was also suggested that further questions/concerns about Moore Field BMPs should be directed to Anton at the NH Agricultural Experiment Station.

C. Meetings with farmers in Durham, Lee, and Madbury – 25 January 2022

Chair explained the purpose and scope of this planned meeting. Nine (9) farmers have replied so far. Some have suggested that the meeting be postponed due to the current surge of COVID-19. After some discussion about the pros/cons, it was decided to keep current date. If necessary, the meeting could be postponed to the 1 Feb “snow date.” Ray LaRoche suggested that concerns/questions be submitted by those who plan to participate prior to the meeting.

**2. Old Business**

A. AgComm Initiatives

1. Rezoning Proposal – Chair suggested no further action was warranted.

2. Bee-Friendly Program – Lee Alexander reported:

- More AgComm members want to become beekeepers. Currently, Lee, Dave, and Ellen have beehives. Ray and Bryan plan to start beekeeping next May.
- Holly Philbrick reported that Emery Farm plans to expand from 3 hives to a 5-hive apiary next May. Holly also mentioned that the demand for local honey exceeds supply.
- Lee will be compiling/submitting 2021 annual report/re-cert to Xerces Society next month.
- Holly requested that two more BeeCity USA signs be posted along manor entrance roads to Durham.

3. Food Friendly Yard – Ellen Karelitz sent out an e-mail requesting responses to what motivates residents to have a Food Friendly Yard.

4. Garden and Farm Mentors – Brian Cassidy reported that he is working to schedule another program on fruit tree pruning and home animal care. He may also help teach with Pam McPhee at UNH or the Browne Center.

5. Durham Farm Day – 20 August 2022

- Chair briefly mentioned some of the types of exhibits and activities that could be offered.
- Anton suggested that there could be a Farm Day Boot Camp.

B. Climate Adaption Master Plan Chapter – Paul confirmed that this matter is currently on hold.

C. Winter Farmers' Markets – Exeter has moved to the Stratham Food Coop.

D. Land Stewardship Subcommittee – John Carroll mentioned the upcoming Zoom meeting with Doug Tallamy (Univ. of Delaware) on 28 February 2022. He will send out more details via e-mail.

D. Community Gardens – Ellen Karelitz provided a brief update.

**3. Other Business**

A. Alberto Manalo suggested that there may be another use for the map that Anton prepared showing the location of garden plots in Durham. Potentially, it may be useful to identify those neighborhoods in Town (i.e., “clusters”) where there might be more cooperation and collaboration between those who have gardens.

B. Dave Langley brought up the topic of “heritage grains” and their resiliency. Perhaps a test/demo plot could be created at one of the community garden sites for grain growing. Possible uses include locally grown grains for bread flour and micro-brewing beer.

C. Anton mentioned the UNH McFarland Greenhouses will have an open house on 2 April 2022. Potentially, AgComm may want to have a booth.

Next AgComm meeting: 14 February 2022 (tentative)

**4. Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm**

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Recorded by Lee Alexander