

Durham Agricultural Commission
14 February 2022
Durham Police Station – Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Members present: Theresa Walker (Chair), Ray LaRoche (Vice Chair), Paul Rasmussen (Planning Board Rep), Lee Alexander, Anton Bekkerman, John Carroll, Dave Langley, Alberto Manalo, Holly Philbrick, and Dan Winans

Members absent: Bryan Cassidy, Ellen Karelitz and Jim Lawson (Town Council Rep)

1. New Business

A. Minutes

10 January 2022 AgComm Meeting – Approved (no changes).
25 January 2022 Oyster River Foodshed Work Session - Approved

B. Correspondence

- Anton will give a presentation on Nutrient Loading (related to Moore Fields) at the next Town Council meeting.
- A Farm Style Breakfast is scheduled for 3 April 2022 at the Lee Grange Hall.
- A “Civic Innovation Challenge” by National Science Foundation was briefly described by Anton. It involves a Climate Change Action Initiative being established in Durham, Lee, Madbury, and UNH.

C. Review of the 25 January 2022 Oyster River Foodshed Work Session

1. Chair asked for brief comments and reactions. General consensus is that the meeting was a good start. In particular, there was a lot of energy from farmer producers.

2. Lee Alexander briefed on his proposed three follow-on actions resulting from the initial meeting. Ideally, they can be discussed/agreed at the upcoming Oyster River Foodshed group meeting.

a) Create a **Master List** of all the farms in Durham, Madbury, and Lee

There was full support for establishing this list for Durham. Both printed and website, including a map. Durham has a graphics artist (Laura Harper) and can help with website and layout. Lee and Anton are willing to help compile the list and look into applying for a grant to support this effort.

b) **Oyster River Foodshed Market** hosted at Emery Farm

This was agreed. Emery Farm is an ideal location and would provide more visibility about what is being grown and available (what, where, when) in the three-town area. It is not certain how this might impact the Durham Farmer’s Market (now organized by “Seacoast Eat Local.”). Holly Philbrick will take the lead.

c) **Pros/Cons of Three Rivers Farmer’s Alliance approach**

- Wait for now.

D. Spring AgComm public outreach – maple sugaring, lambing season, garden planning, etc.

The basic idea is to provide some seasonal agricultural activities in addition to what occurs during the annual Durham Farm Day. Announcement could be made in the “Friday Update.” Ray LaRoche is not certain about maple sugaring, but will consider. Chair is also willing to show lambs. Alberto Manalo suggested there could be a seminar on garden planning. Holly offered that this could be hosted at Emery Farm. Potentially, Brian could do backyard sugaring. Dave could do “no-till” - raised beds vegetable gardens.

2. Old Business

A. AgComm Initiatives

1. Bee-Friendly Program – Lee Alexander reported that he has started compiling the necessary input for the 2021 annual report/re-certification to Xerces Society. It is due by the end of this month.

2. Food Friendly Yard – Ellen Karelitz was absent.

3. Garden and Farm Mentors – Brian Cassidy will be doing a pruning workshop.

4. Durham Farm Day – 20 August 2022

B. Farmers' Markets – Seacoast Growers no longer exists. Now being organized by “Seacoast Eat Local.”

D. Land Stewardship Subcommittee – John Carroll reported on a UNH grad student ecology project at Spruce Hole. He also mentioned the upcoming Doug Tallamy webinar.

D. Community Gardens – Ellen Karelitz was absent. Holly mentioned that there was no information on the Town webpage about the community garden at Wagon Hill. Apparently, the “group” (Wagon Farm Community Garden) has their own website.

3. Other Business

- There was a brief discussion about the difference between regional and community foodsheds.

Next AgComm meeting: 8 February 2022 (tentative)

4. Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Recorded by Lee Alexander