

Meeting Minutes  
Durham Agricultural Commission  
March 14, 2022

Commission Members Present: Ray LaRoche, Bryan Cassidy, David Langley, Ellen Karelitz, John Carroll, Paul Rasmussen, Dan Winans, Alberto Manalo, Theresa Walker

Commission Members Absent: Lee Alexander, Holly Philbrick, Anton Bekkerman, Jim Lawson

I. New Business

A. Minutes of the February 14<sup>th</sup> meeting – Carroll moved to accept the minutes as presented. LaRoche seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Correspondence – Walker reviewed correspondence shared with Ag Comm members since the last meeting.

C. Review of February 22<sup>nd</sup> foodshed meeting – LaRoche said discussion at the meeting included production of a map of farms in all three towns and a proposed market at Emery Farm designed to provide local farms and gardeners with a sales opportunity. Cassidy said the survey being sent to farmers does not provide an opportunity to comment on community-based work and education, such as fruit pruning and collective sap boiling. Manalo said producers appear to be interested in organizing but there is a need for a broader group which includes consumers and facilitators.

Langley said local farms could also provide supplies for backyard food production, such as chicks, seeds, and piglets. Other opportunities include neighborhood scale food production hubs, education on food storage and preservation and seed saving and exchange, information on expanding the growing season via hoophouses and greenhouses, and fiber production. Karelitz said the Food Friendly Yard program is neighborhood scale food production but has not resulted in much cooperation. Cassidy said there are many ways to move forward at many scales. LaRoche said the public needs information on where to find backyard gardening and farm supplies. Cassidy added that knowledge and skills are also resources in need of sharing. Walker will start drafting a spreadsheet that includes columns of resource types – labor, knowledge, tools, farm supplies, etc.

D. Spring Ag Comm public outreach – Karelitz will submit information to Friday Update about information already available on the Ag Comm webpage regarding garden design, prep, and management. LaRoche said his maple syrup season is almost over so offering an open house at his sugar shack this year does not work. Walker said lambing season is over in her barn and people are welcome to visit but her yard is not well suited to hosting a public event due to lack of parking.

II. Old Business

A. Ag Comm Initiatives:

- Bee Friendly Program – Walker read an update provided by Lee Alexander – The annual recertification for our BeeCity USA has been submitted. He will be posting a link to the recent webinar presentation by Doug Tallamy on the importance of pollinators. Also, at the February

foodshed meeting Alexander volunteered to compile a list of farms in Durham, Lee, and Madbury.

- Food Friendly Yard – Karelitz said she is willing to re-start the yard tours on Farm Day or she might open up her farm, Whale Rock farm, that day.
- Garden and Farm Mentors – Cassidy said folks have been busy boiling sap and pruning fruit trees and bushes and grape vines.
- Durham Farm Day – It was decided that the April Ag Comm meeting will focus on Farm Day and the idea to expand the day to include Lee and Madbury. Walker will invite Erick Sawtelle and Jennifer Wilhelm to join the meeting.

B. Farmers' Markets – Walker said the Durham summer farmers' markets will now be managed by Seacoast Eat Local as Seacoast Growers Association had disbanded. The markets will be held again on Monday afternoons in the Sammy's Lot.

C. Land Stewardship Subcommittee – Carroll said the video of Doug Tallamy's talk will be edited and the Ag Comm should promote the video.

D. Community Gardens – Karelitz said the gardens at Wagon Hill hold their opening meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

III. Other Business – Walker reminded the group about the April 3<sup>rd</sup> Strafford County Farm Bureau breakfast at Lee Grange hosted by the Durham and Lee Agricultural Commissions. Volunteers are needed before and during the breakfast. Walker asked LaRoche if he is preparing a float for the Memorial Day Parade and he said yes he is.

IV. Adjourn – Manalo moved to adjourn the meeting. LaRoche seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.