

Durham Agricultural Commission

9 May 2022

Durham Police Department

Meeting Minutes

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

Members absent: Ellie Lonske (Town Council Rep) and Paul Rasmussen (Planning Board Rep)
Anton Bekkerman and Dan Winans

Visitors: Nell Neal – Durham Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee

1. New Business

A. Discussion with Cathy Fletcher, Town of Durham Sustainability Fellow
– Unable to attend due to another commitment.

B. Discussion with Nell Neal, Town of Durham Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee
Nell Neal explained the work on composting by the Regional Compost Working Group (RCWG) -- a combined Durham–Lee–Madbury–UNH Sustainability Institute Working Group. As described in the Conclusion of the Final Report and Recommendations (18 Jan 2022), the “RCWG explored ways the Oyster River region can reduce the food waste that ends up in landfills or incinerated. The recommendations mainly focus on continuing education to reduce food waste in the solid waste stream and increase food scrap composting at home/on-site through the available programs. “John Carroll feels that “yard and/or food waste” is a misnomer. Both should be considered a resource to be recycled

Ray LaRoche described the past/current effort that he conducts to collect “yard waste” and then convert the material into compost that is used for his agricultural crops at LaRoche Farm

Ms. Neal explained the current role/focus of the Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee (IWMAC) related to composting and recycling. This effort includes promoting various slogans such as “Recycle Right”, “Sustainable Durham”, etc. She also mentioned some other “buzzwords”, including “resilience”, “sustainability”, “responsible”, “reciprocity”, etc. While there is interest by the Town Administrator, it is difficult to determine which words would be the most “meaningful” to use.

Chair suggested that the IWMAC participate in Oyster River Farm Day.

C. Minutes from April Meeting – Approved with a minor addition (Elle Lonske is the new Town Council Rep to AgComm).

D. Correspondence
- Chair mentioned information that was distributed on Climate Action Plan.

E. Report on the April 20th Foodshed Meeting
Chair provided a summary of what was discussed.

There are two focus areas:

- 1) Compiling a listing of what is being locally grown (who, what, where, when, etc.)
- 2) Sharing information and resources between local farmers.

F. Planning for Oyster River “Farm Day” (20 August 2022)

There will be various events/demos in Durham at:

Emery Farm
LaRoche Farm
Community Garden (at Wagon Hill)
UNH Horticultural Farm and UNH Dairy Farm

G. Durham Day – June 4th

This event will be held at the new Town Parking Lot (on Main Street) on 4 June 2022 during 12:30PM -2:30PM.

Chair suggested there be a an AgComm table/tent. Information to be distributed could include AgComm brochure, Bee bookmark, pollinator info, Xerces Society brochure, seacoast eat local, etc. Ray LaRoche and Lee Alexander volunteered to gather this information and man the table.

2. Old Business

A. AgComm Initiatives

1. Bee Friendly Program – Lee Alexander reported that a Dandelion Lawn Contest will not be held this year. Instead, an alternative initiative promoted by the *Xerces Society* called “No-mow May” will be conducted. Like “Re-thinking Your Lawn”, Town residents will be encouraged to purposely leave their lawn unmown during May. Brief write-ups will be posted in the “*Friday Updates*”, including:

No-Mow May (the *Xerces Society* announcement)

Dandelion Lawn and Honeybees

Wildflowers are Not Weeds

Importance of Pollinators: The Birds and Bees

Re-think you Lawn: Achieve More by doing Less

2. Food Friendly Yard – Ellen Karelitz suggested that this program be discontinued.

3. Garden and Farm Mentors – Brian Cassidy reported plans for a garlic pesto workshop.

4. Durham Farm Day (20 August 2022) - [previously discussed in Agenda item 2G]

B. Farmers’ Markets – Should begin on 7 June 2022. Will be located at new downtown parking lot.

D. Land Stewardship Subcommittee – John Carroll reported some initiatives related to Doug Tallamy’s webinar on pollinators.

D. Community Gardens – Ellen Karelitz reported on initial workday meeting on 8 April. Old garden beds have been replaced. There will be about 70 gardeners.

3. Other Business

A. none

Next AgComm meeting: 13 June 2022

Meeting adjourned at 8:24pm

Recorded by Lee Alexander