

Meeting Minutes
Durham Agricultural Commission
September 12, 2022

Committee Members Present: Ray LaRoche, Ellen Karelitz, Alberto Manalo, Bryan Cassidy, John Carroll, Paul Rasmussen, Anton Bekkerman, Dave Langley, Theresa Walker

Committee Members Absent: Holly Philbrick, Dan Winans, Ellie Lonske, Lee Alexander

I. New Business

A. Minutes from the August Meeting – Manalo made a correction to the minutes, under New Business the minutes should state the July meeting minutes were approved, not the June meeting minutes. Carroll moved to approve the minutes with the correction. LaRoche seconded the motion. Cassidy abstained from voting as he was absent from the meeting. The motion passed.

B. Correspondence – Walker reported a complaint about a possible rooster at a residence on Beard's Landing, per an email from Kitty Marple. Audrey Cline will follow up.

C. Farm Day Recap – The group discussed Farm Day and deemed it a success with good attendance at all sites, including the new sites in Lee and Madbury. To improve the event next year, it was decided to meet with the Lee Ag Comm and Madbury farmers in February to create the event schedule and enable publicity to start earlier than this year. More signs and banners are also needed, as well as putting the full list of events offered at each site on the placemat. Making connections between the farms and three towns was also discussed with the idea of creating a scavenger hunt or bingo contest across all participating farms.

D. Review Proposed Solar Ordinance – The group discussed concerns with the proposed solar ordinance, the primary being the use of open, viable agricultural land for energy production rather than food production. Walker and Langley will draft a memo to the Planning Board for Ag Comm member review and comment.

E. Redefining Agricultural Activity – The group decided to pick back up on changes to the Agricultural Ordinance to enable more small-scale food production and collaboration. Walker, Langley, and Karelitz will work on changes.

II. Old Business

A. Ag Comm Initiatives

- Bee Friendly Program – Alexander was absent from the meeting so no news to report this month.
- Garden and Farm Mentors – Cassidy reported he is moving into cider pressing season and will be working with folks that participated in apple tree pruning
- Oyster River Foodshed – No news to report

B. Farmers' Market – Walker reported many shoppers at the markets she has attended, with long lines for veggies and eggs from Hollister Family Farm.

C. Land Stewardship Subcommittee – Carroll reported 75% of visitors at Wagon Hill Farm are not Durham residents. He suggested the opportunity for more small scale agriculture exists on the property.

Karelitz said the Community Garden has room for more gardens if need be. She added that care and maintenance of the apple trees on the property is needed.

D. Community Gardens – Karelitz reported the gardens have been well maintained this year.

III. Other Business – Walker asked if the October meeting date could be changed from October 10th to October 17th as the 10th is the Indigenous Peoples Day holiday. The group agreed.

IV. Adjourn – Manalo moved to adjourn at 8:15pm. Carroll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.