

Meeting Minutes  
Durham Agricultural Commission  
June 12, 2023

Commission Members Present: Ellen Karelitz, Dave Langley, Ray LaRoche, Alberto Manalo, John Carroll, Lee Alexander, Tom DeCapo, Dan Winans, Anton Bekkerman, Theresa Walker

Commission Members Absent: Ellie Lonske, Holly Philbrick, Bryan Cassidy

Others Present: James Oshina, David Oshina

I. New Business

A. Discussion with James Oshina regarding his proposed Eagle Scout project – James asked the Agricultural Commission for assistance with identifying locations for a pollinator garden as he would like to create a garden in a visible place as part of his Eagle Scout project. The purpose of the garden would be to demonstrate pollinator friendly habitats that others could replicate. He would like the garden to be walkable to Durham schools so classes could visit. Alexander suggested visiting the Xerces Society website for useful information on the needs of pollinators. Winans suggested thinking about the long-term maintenance of the garden. Bekkerman agreed, saying designing a succession plan for the garden so that it continues to be functioning for years would be useful case study. Karelitz suggested that James partner with others or a group on the project, such as Master Gardeners. Manalo suggested James make a video documenting his project that could be shared with others and Town social media. The group recommended James contact Durham DPW for assistance with finding a visible location, such as the library.

B. Minutes of the May Meeting – LaRoche moved to approve the minutes as presented. Manalo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Correspondence – The group discussed correspondence from Todd Selig asking for input on a query from David Hills of Emery Farm. Mr. Hills asked Todd if the Town might have an interest in leasing or selling to him the Wagon Hill Farm North 40 land, to be used for crops or hayrides or other uses. It was agreed we need more specific information about how Emery Farm would use the parcel as the land is very wet and forested and not well suited for crops or hayrides. Also, NH Fish and Game are currently managing the land for New England Cottontail habitat so they would need to be involved in any decisions regarding the parcel.

Walker said the Town has a new Sustainability Fellow. Todd Selig reports the Fellow will be in contact with the Agricultural Commission regarding agricultural activities in town.

D. Prioritize May Work Session Ideas – The group briefly reviewed the list of ideas generated at the May worksession. Manalo offered to work on identifying the next steps for our ideas on cooperative food production. Bekkerman offered to assist with gathering feedback from residents about their interests in food production as well as obstacles to backyard food production.

E. Farm Day Planning – Walker will draft the list of events. The group agreed to finalize the list at the June meeting. Bekkerman will check on which UNH facilities will be open that day.

## II. Old Business

### A. Ag Comm Initiatives

- Redefining Agricultural Activity – Langley said the next step is to apply the formulas to actual lots in town. Walker and Karelitz will work with him on this.
- Bee Friendly Program – Alexander said there are 14 new hives and nine new beekeepers he is mentoring in Durham, Lee, and Madbury. Alexander and LaRoche staffed a table about pollinators at Farm to School Day for several days.

B. Durham Farmers' Market – Walker said the Monday summer market got underway last week.

C. Land Stewardship Subcommittee – Carroll reported that the group is focused on recreational use of land. Alexander said the subcommittee needs to be involved with the Bee City USA program.

D. Community Gardens – Karelitz said the gardens have found a new beekeeper. The cool and wet weather has made for tough gardening at times.

### III. Adjourn

Manalo moved to adjourn at 8:25pm. Carroll seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.