

Durham Agricultural Commission

10 July 2023

7:00pm, Council Meeting Room, Durham Town Hall

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Members present: Theresa Walker (Chair), Ray LaRoche (Vice Chair), Ellie Lonske (Town Council Rep), and Tom DeCapo (Planning Board Rep)
Lee Alexander, Anton Bekkerman, John Carroll, Bryan Cassidy, Ellen Karelitz, Dave Langley, Alberto Manalo, Holly Philbrick, and Dan Winans.

Members absent: none

Visitors: none

1. New Business

A. Minutes of the June Meeting – Approved, with three abstentions (Lonske, Philbrick, & Cassidy).

B. Correspondence

- Chair mentioned the e-mail from Michael Behrendt about criteria for maintaining “Open Space”, and how this relates to agricultural land. Lee Alexander suggested there needs to be a better definition about what constitutes “open space”. Also, should agricultural land be regarded as “developed land”? After some discussion, Alexander was “volunteered” to meet with Michael Behrendt to further discuss and report back.

C. Farm Day Planning

Chair reviewed and then led a discussion that modified and/or added-to the list of activities. She will make arrangements for a poster/placemat along with a separate list of sites that can be visited.

D. Collaborative Food Production

Alberto Manalo introduced the paper he drafted on this topic. He feels that this is a matter worth exploring, but may take time before it could be implemented. Food insecurity may be a motivation. Chair suggested that perhaps Bekkerman could develop a set of questions that could be used to gain the interest of Town residents.

Chair suggested that a workplan for Phase 1 (described in Manalo’s paper) be implemented. It was agreed to establish an AgComm Working Group to develop a list of questions that can be posed to potential participants. Bekkerman also agreed to assist.

2. Old Business

A. AgComm Initiatives

1. Redefining Agricultural Activity – Dave Langley explained how his “spreadsheet” could evolve into a presentation to be given to the Town Administrator or Town Council members. In particular, it could be used to list the various types of Agriculture in Durham (personal use, production/for sale).

2. Bee Friendly Program – Lee Alexander reported on several topics:

- LSC Chair will be interim POC on Durham’s Bee City USA annual activities
- He sent pollinator garden/habitat information for the proposed Eagle Scout Project
- The rainy month of June has hindered beehive development and honey production in the NH Seacoast region.
- He received four e-mails and five phone calls related to honeybees, native pollinators, and impacts of pesticide use (pros and cons).

3. Garden and Farm Mentors – Brian Cassidy mentioned a broom making workshop this Saturday at Tuckaway Farm (2-4pm).

4. Oyster River Foodshed – Holly Philbrick will print out a copy of the Foodshed Map that can be distributed on Farm Day.

5. Farm Day (19 August 2023) – [previously discussed in 1.C]

B. Durham Farmer’s’ Market – Chair mentioned that an A-frame sign needs to be put out and taken in (somewhere in Downtown area) each Monday morning.

C. Land Stewardship Subcommittee - John Carroll reported that LSSC will not meet again until September.

D. Wagon Hill Community Garden – Ellen Karelitz mentioned that a recent meeting had 21 attendees. Compared to previous years, the Community Garden is now having significant issues with woodchucks and deer.

3. Other Business

- no topics brought up

Next meeting 14 August 2023

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

Recorded by Lee Alexander