

Meeting Minutes  
Durham Agricultural Commission  
December 11, 2023

Committee Members Present: Dave Langley, Ellen Karelitz, Tom DeCapo, Bryan Cassidy, John Carroll, Lee Alexander, Dan Winans, Ray LaRoche, Anton Bekkerman, Theresa Walker

Committee Members Absent: Alberto Manalo, Ellie Lonske, Holly Philbrick

I. New Business

- A. Minutes of the November Meeting – DeCapo said the minutes should reflect the discussion held about positioning the activities of the Ag Comm for the future, including public engagement. LaRoche moved to accept the minutes as amended. DeCapo Seconded the motion. The motion passed. Walker and Bekkerman abstained.
- B. Correspondence – Walker highlighted the Ag Experiment Station magazine edited by Bekkerman.
- C. Review Proposed Zoning Amendments – The group reviewed the two emails from Michael Behrendt regarding two proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance. The first proposal is moving the definition of Agriculture from the definition section to the table of uses section, which the Ag Comm agrees with. The second proposal is to combine the wetland protection overlay and the shoreland protection overlay into one overlay district. Walker and Langley will meet with Behrendt and Audrey Cline to discuss this proposal in greater detail.

II. Old Business

A. Ag Comm Initiatives

- Cooperative Food Production – Bekkerman will draft a “pitch” to be used to invite residents to participate in focus groups to gauge interest in backyard food production. Topics for discussion with the focus groups could include defining cooperative food production and how that would look and work in town. And what kind of changes would people support to increase opportunities for local food production.
  - Dave’s Spreadsheet – It was agreed that Langley and Walker will discuss our suggested renaming of agriculture intensity levels (homestead, cooperative, production) with Michael Behrendt and Audrey Cline when we meet with them to discuss the proposed zoning amendments.
  - Bee Friendly Program – Alexander reported 90% hive mortality last year due to high wind in December and the following deep freeze. He has received queries from UNH students regarding pollinator gardens on campus and the Bee City USA program and told them about the Bee Campus USA program. He will be compiling the annual report to the Xerces Society.
  - Garden and Farm Mentors – Cassidy said he is organizing pruning workshop with LaRoche and Emery Farm.
- B. Land Stewardship Committee – Carroll reported there has been nothing on the agenda related to Ag Comm interests.
  - C. Community Gardens – Karelitz reported the garden beds are packed away for the winter. A pretty good season but wet.

III. Other Business

- A. History of farms in Durham – presentation – Walker will contact the Durham Historic Association to ask if they would be interested in

IV. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.