

Meeting Minutes
Durham Agricultural Commission
October 21, 2024

Commission members present – Bryan Cassidy, Alberto Manalo, Ray LaRoche, Dave Langley, John Carroll, Lee Alexander, Holly Philbrick, Theresa Walker

Commission members absent – Anton Bekkerman, Dan Winans, Ellen Karelitz, Tom DeCapo, Curtis Springer

I. New Business

- A. UNH capstone project ideas – Erin Hale of the UNH Sustainability Institute could not join the meeting for this discussion but the group agreed to submit an application requesting the help of capstone students with Ag Comm initiatives. Walker will submit the request.
- B. Minutes of the September meeting – Philbrick corrected the minutes, noting she was present. Manalo moved to approve the minutes with the correction. LaRoche seconded the motion. The motion passed with Carroll abstaining.
- C. Correspondence – Walker noted correspondence received since the last meeting included the email from Doug Clark and his concerns about local businesses having to compete with the Farmers' Market.
- D. NH Food and Agriculture Strategic Plan public review and comments – Langley said he had reviewed several of the briefs and had no concerns.

II. Old Business

A. Ag Comm Initiatives:

- Resident Outreach – Manalo distributed the latest version of the survey of residents designed to gauge support for growing food. The group suggested edits, including revising questions 1 and 2 to state, do you currently grow a portion of your own food, asking what percentage of their food they produce, adding mentoring to the list of resources, and adding a question asking if the respondent needs a farm and garden mentor or if they would like to be a mentor.
- Animal Capacity Estimator – on hold
- Bee Friendly Program – Alexander reported it has been a challenging year for beekeeping and honey production. Due to spring weather coming three weeks earlier than normal, honey production was significantly higher than for past years. However, the lack of significant rainfall during late June through mid-September adversely impacted wildflower nectar. This caused low yields of summer and fall honey. At the Moharimet School 3rd grade field trip to Emery Farm on October 4th, Alexander gave talks on beekeeping and beneficial pollinators.
- Garden and Farm Mentors – Cassidy reported he led a broom making workshop at Woodman Farm and is planning broom making workshops at Tuckaway Farm using broom corn grown at Woodman Farm as part of a research project. He will be leading fruit tree pruning workshops at LaRoche Farm and Tuckaway Farm.
- Farmers' Market – Walker said winter farmers' market will begin next month at the Cooperative Middle School in Stratham and Wentworth Greenhouse in Rollinsford.

- B. Land Stewardship Subcommittee – Carroll said the subcommittee has not been involved with agriculture related business. He noted that there was a successful fundraiser for NOFA NH at the Works Café. He added that UVM is leasing privately owned land for agricultural research and UNH could do the same.

C. Community Gardens – no update

III. Other Business – Langley reported he has had modest success growing peanuts.

- IV. Adjourn – Alexander moved to adjourn at 7:50pm. Manalo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.