

Meeting Minutes
Durham Agricultural Commission
February 10, 2025

Commission Members Present: John Carroll, Ellen Karelitz, Dave Langley, Ray LaRoche, Bryan Cassidy, Anton Bekkerman, Alberto Manalo, Curtis Register, Dan Winans, Theresa Walker

Commission Members Absent: Lee Alexander, Holly Philbrick

Others Present: Nell Neal, Peter Yost, Brett Schultz, Josephine DeMerit

I. New Business

- A. Discussion with UNH Capstone Students – Manalo introduced two of the four Capstone students assisting with the Ag Comm survey, Brett Schultz and Josephine DeMerit. The students will be distributing the survey, compiling results, and producing a summary report. They will also be updating the bee bookmark.
- B. Discussion with members of the IWMAC about composting – Nell Neal and Peter Yost of the IWMAC were present and the group discussed ways in which the Ag Comm and the IWMAC can collaborate to increase the composting of food waste. 24% of household waste is food waste, which is heavy, and adds a lot of weight to the waste stream going to the landfill. The Town has no funds to establish a curbside composting program. The group discussed the risk of external contaminants in compost. Neal said Mr. Fox does not test for contaminants. Yost described the Brattleboro, VT composting facility which does test for heavy metals. The Brattleboro program is very successful with compostable and recyclable waste collected curbside once week and trash only needing to be collected every other. Farm Day is one opportunity to educate people about food waste composting and the Ag Comm will think about othes. Bekkerman asked if there is a demand for compost and suggested that economies of scale may determine it would be best for food waste to be composted by DPW in a central spot. La Roche said he has been composting yard waste dropped off at the transfer station for over 20 years on his farm.
- C. Minutes of the January meeting – Manalo moved to accept the minutes as presented. LaRoche seconded the motion. The motion passed with Karelitz abstaining.
- D. Seedling Exchange – The group discussed hosting a series of seedling exchanges to encourage more food gardens. Karelitz said Seacoast Permaculture has held an exchange at Wagon Hill and she will get the details so the Ag Comm can promote this event.

II. Old Business

- A. Resident Outreach/Survey – The group made edits to the final survey. The survey will be distributed via town and library email lists and Friday Update.

III. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 9:00pm