

Lee Agricultural Commission

April 24, 2017

Present: Chuck Cox, Erick Sawtelle, Paul Gasowski, Dwight Barney, Donna Lee Woods, Amanda Gourgue, Laura Gund, and Cary Brown, Selectmen's Representative.

Guests: Tina Sawtelle, Shelly Smith and Jill Hall.

Seacoast Eat Local: Shelly Smith and Jill Hall were present tonight in order to discuss the Seacoast Eat Local program with us, particularly the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) program which is managed by the government. The USDA wants Farmers Markets to be able to accept SNAP, which Seacoast Eat Local does at seven markets in the area, including the Rollinsford and Exeter winter markets. There is no reduced value for accepting SNAP, but the problem is the cost of extra staff. If farmers market personnel could handle SNAP, that would be helpful. Asked how the Agricultural Commission could help them, Jill said that more communication would be helpful, for instance the Lee Farmers Market Facebook Page is liked by 724 people. The Seacoast Harvest Magazine is also available at farmers markets. Since there are only two people on staff, they have limited time. They have applied for a grant for summertime help. They also discussed SAMM - the Seacoast Area Mobil Market, which purchases produce from local farmers and then sells it in communities that do not have farmers markets.

Lee Farmers Market: Tina was here to tell us that the market will be celebrating its 10th anniversary this year! There is some concern amongst vendors that attendance has been low recently. We have a new market master this year and, after a discussion, the core group of vendors decided they would like to continue the market. There are 14 or so vendors to start the season, with a few new ones. Seacoast Eat Local will promote opening day. UNH has been surveying vendors and then will survey customers.

Minutes: Dwight moved and Paul 2nd to accept the minutes of March 28th as corrected.

Finances: There is \$4908.07 in the account, and a \$500 bill to be paid. The Farmers Market account has \$1784.10, with a \$25 bill from the NHFMA (NH Farmers Market Assoc.).

Backyard Farming Initiative: The committee will get together to discuss the final program which will be a "Round Table" discussion. There will be a questionnaire before the meeting, asking what people would like to see for programs.

Newsletter: There will be a meeting tomorrow night of a group of people interested in a paper newsletter going out to the citizens, to discuss the pros and cons.

Our next meeting will be May 30, 2017.

Minutes submitted by Laura Gund