

March 27, 2012

Lee Agricultural Commission

Present: Erick Sawtelle, Dwight Barney, Paul Gasowski, Laurel Cox, Wendy Fogg, Donna Lee Wood and Laura Gund.

Guests included: Tina Sawtelle, Chuck Cox and David Boynton, Director of Seacoast Local.

**Food Hub:** Paul invited Mr. Boynton to our meeting with the Noble Farm project in mind. Since the Ag. Comm was successful in asking for agricultural provisions to be included in the new zoning for Noble Farm, it would appear that there is some interest in having an agricultural enterprise located there, such as a commercial kitchen. Mr. Boynton talked extensively about Seacoast Local and some of their programs, such as Buy Local. He discussed “slow money”: connecting local investors to food projects, usually loans without capital. “Re-routed” is a food program which runs various food groups. On April 2<sup>nd</sup> they would be at the Stone Church with a public presentation about the local food network. He talked about Food Hubs where you might sell everything you can at market, and then the rest would be available at a Food Hub (extra cukes for instance, could be made into relish and pickles). Amy Winans, a board member of Seacoast Local, is a “forager”, or someone who understands what can be done with extra foods, i.e. food banks and such. Amy runs Gourmet Dinners. The challenge with such activities is making sure you have the supply and have crop plans with the local farmers. An advantage we have in this area is the availability of seafood: shrimp, scallops, etc. Many places are anxious to buy local seafood, including the hospitals in the area. Mr. Boynton spoke extensively of his experiences, as well of other on-going programs. The NHCDFA (NH Community Development Finance Authority) is available with low interest loans and grants. Finally, it all comes down to having a steady, reliable supply available, with someone doing the regulatory aspects of the whole thing. There are limitations to what can be done at Noble Farm. Possibly there are other sites available in Lee. So, the final plan at this point would be to write up a tentative proposal, and approach some landowners at the traffic circle to find out about the possibility of other sites. Paul and Laurel agreed to put together a proposal.

**Minutes:** Dwight made a motion, and Donna Lee seconded, that we accept the minutes of February 28, 2012 as read. Approved.

**Financial Report:** Unfortunately, Wendy has found it necessary to step down from the Agricultural Commission and the Treasurer’s job. However, Donna Lee has agreed to take on this responsibility. As of January 2012, there was \$5877.93 in the account, including the Farmers Market funds. Wendy transferred the treasurer’s papers to Donna Lee and explained the procedure for approving invoices.

**Newsletter:** A motion was made and seconded, by Dwight and Laura, to approve the payment of \$760.40 for the printing of the recent newsletter. Motion passed.

**Sustainability:** Paul updated us on his sustainability activities within the ORSD. Warrant Article #5 passed at the recent town/school voting. Included in the article was money to buy food from local farmers. Food Service is working on procedures to identify farmers and auditing kitchens for capability to process food. \$47,000 was included in the article, to be used for energy audits, converting the buses

to bio-diesel, school gardens in each of the three towns, etc. The school district will handle the funds which will not be available until July 1<sup>st</sup>. The voting was substantially in favor of the article.

**UNH Diagnostic Lab:** Discussion of the activities involved in saving the Diagnostic Lab at UNH from closing down. The end result was that the Lab is safe for this year, while doubling the amount of fee work that they must do. Also at risk was the Weights and Measures Department in the NHDAMF. This required attendance at legislative hearings.

**Old Home Day:** At the next meeting, the discussion will focus on Who Will Do What; how will we handle the money, parking and traffic issues, as well as location of different activities within the park. The Church, Grange and Firemen's Association all hope to be able to raise money at this event.

**Commission members:** Dave Allen and Tom McCabe are up for renewal this year. Erick will contact them.

Next meeting: April 24, 2012.

Minutes submitted by Laura Gund