

Lee Agricultural Commission

November 1, 2016

The October meeting of the Agricultural Commission was postponed to this date.

Present at this meeting were Erick Sawtelle, Chuck Cox, Dwight Barney, Paul Gasowski, Donna-Lee Wood, Laura Gund.

Minutes: Dwight approved the minutes of September 26, 2016, Paul seconded. Minutes were approved.

Financial: The Farmers Market balance is the same as the previous month, \$1809.10. The Commission has a balance of \$5401.81.

Backyard Farming Initiative: One of the speakers this year will be from the NH Farm Museum and though we do not “pay” speakers as a rule, it was agreed that we would make a donation to the Farm Museum. Chuck made a motion to that effect and it was passed. Last year we gave the Grange \$500 for the use of the building during the programs and Erick will check with the Grange to see how much the cost will be this year. The programs are all set for the upcoming session.

Farmers Market: A letter has been received from one of the market vendors with questions about the future of the market, noting the lack of interest in markets and considering a possible change of venue. In the past there have not been regular meetings with the vendors. If the markets were moved, there would be an increase in insurance costs as we are on town-owned land now. Interest in markets is waning across the state and because of lack of customers, vendors are leaving. Erick will speak to Dick Babcock about setting up a vendors’ meeting with two issues to discuss: the larger growers are leaving, with just a few small growers remaining, how to keep the larger growers. And should the market be moved?

Chuck commented that they (Tuckaway Farm) haven’t been going to market partly due to lack of communication between vendors and market master and feels the groups has to get together for conversations. Donna-Lee commented that all markets are about half of what they used to be. Whole Foods has local food now and is cutting into the farmers’ markets. There has to be an event to draw people in and something for the kids. The bigger markets all have regular programs. The old-style markets are gone. Donna-Lee delivers products in the Cambridge area and finds that profitable. Chuck has CSA’s and restaurant marketing. Paul buys locally at farm stores.

Also, the Agricultural Commission needs to re-visit the rules we originally set.

Town Center Facilities Committee: Paul and Dwight are both on this committee which is having regular meetings now. They have discussed the town buildings, storage needs, the Grange, Hobo Shed, a kiosk, Little River Park (Farmers Markets?)

2017: Check our current ordinances.

Current Use Hearings: These are coming up (one on the 10th in Concord) and one discussion will be: How to address buildings on CU land without taking footprint of the building.

Next meeting will be November 29, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Laura Gund