

Lee Agricultural Commission

September 26, 2016

Present: Erick Sawtelle, Amanda Gourgue, Dwight Barney, Donna-Lee Woods, Paul Gasowski, Chuck Cox and Laura Gund.

Guests: Executive Chef James Costello from Flag Hill Winery and Christa Phaneuf, Events Manager, Flag Hill and also from Flag Hill, owner Brian Ferguson. Scott Bugbee, Lee Selectmen, joined us as a private citizen. And Corey Skeens from Lee was “just visiting.” He is studying a course at Great Bay and felt that monitoring our meeting would be helpful.

Minutes: Dwight made the motion and Paul seconded the motion to accept the minutes of August 29, 2016 as read. Approved unanimously.

Financial: The Ag. Commission has \$5625.66 in their account and the Farmers Market has \$1809.10.

Settlers JubiLee: General discussion with all involved about this event, which turned out to be “difficult to do” with having to plan the event ahead of time, before the 10 or 12 farms involved knew exactly what they would have available at the time of the event. In the end, more tickets could have been sold if there had been more food available. Another time, they might try a few less entrees and more appetizers. In order to make money, or even to break even, they would have had to charge considerably more money per ticket. They “stayed true to foods from Lee – about 95%.” Brian feels they would entertain the idea of trying this again. Another time we should try to get people from other towns. Christa Phaneuf agrees that it should have brought more people from around the area in order to “somehow diversify the risk away from Flag Hill.” Discussed the cost of raising animals. Ideas were suggested, including “buying into the supper ahead of time” similar to a CSA. Money up front could make a difference another time. Before they left, the folks from Flag Hill gave us the SettlersJubiLee sign which they had signed, to pass on to the 250th committee.

Lee Fair:

Farm Games: Chuck feels the Farm Games went well at the Fair on September 10th. It turns out the Boy Scouts would like to be more involved in the Games. Both adult and kids game participation was up a bit this year. Paul feels the Scouts could help with the kids’ games with more communication and direction for the Scouts. They (the Games committee) need more help altogether. Volunteers have to know exactly what’s expected of them. The schedule worked out well this year. It might work better to move the Farm Games nearer to the Tractor Pull or move the times closer. The tractor pull had 70+ kids involved and it went much faster due to the new pulling equipment that the Police Department provided for the fair.

Horseshoes: Since this was the first year and it wasn’t heavily advertised, only 8 or 9 people participated. Next year Bill Stevens will handle the horseshoes.

Best of Harvest Contest: This year the contest was run by Kristen Ciseros and it was a success with 33 entries of all kinds.

The fair itself was very well planned and it appears to be most everyone’s opinion that Little River Park was a good location, with all the improvements that have been made to the park. Most people have not heard anything negative, other than lack of shade. Everyone seemed to enjoy the fair, including the first time ever fireworks. Many hope the fireworks will continue, but the big question is how to pay for them.

Harvest Supper: The chicken was excellent and received rave reviews (the crew marinated it beforehand). 250 tickets were sold. There were 8# of pork left over, a few chickens and 5# of beans. \$2236 income, \$1376.36 expenditures, \$859.64 profit. Erick was able to find a freezer for the apple crisp ice cream at a house on Granger Drive for \$70. This will be stored in a shed at the Safety Complex.

Motion by Dwight to give the Grange \$225 for the use of the building for food preparation. Paul 2nd and motion is approved. Another motion by Paul to appropriate \$1376.36 to cover barbecue expenses. Dwight 2nds and this motion is approved.

Paul suggests we purchase appropriate items for food prep, i.e. a coring device, etc. Chuck suggests we put it on e-crier asking for these items. We could also contact Wendy Fogg and ask her to put it in her monthly newsletter.

Backyard Farming Initiative: The committee continues to work on the upcoming program. Ruth from the library and Annie Gasowski will provide food for the programs, Don Quigley has agreed to be the moderator. The Lee Historical Society will work on the “Looking Back” program and local farmers will do the “1850-2000” section about farming and the railroad, possible suggestions are Randy Stevens and Phil Sanborn. The 2000-2017 will cover Farmers Markets, agritourism, existing farms and trends, etc. with speakers such as Lorraine Merrill, Commissioner of Agriculture, Markets & Food. Dwight wondered how many types of farms in Lee and Chuck commented that our farmers always did (and do) other things. We talked with our guest, Cory, a young farmer, about how aspiring young farmers can get started, how can they be successful, etc. There are specific programs geared toward young farmers. Donna-Lee and Chuck felt that the problem of getting young people involved in agriculture would be a good future topic.

Budget Committee: After discussion, it was agreed that we would request no appropriation this year. Donna-Lee made the motion and Paul 2nd. Approved.

Master Plan: The final draft of the Master Plan was presented and approved.

Next Meeting October 25, 2016.

Minutes submitted by Laura Gund