

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES
December 15, 2020

Attendance:

Jim Dunn, Tom O'Shea, Chris Hugo, Maleah Gustafson, Nancy Rocheleau, Amy Parker (guest). The meeting was called to order at 7:09 p.m.

MINUTES:

October minutes were voted on and approved. Tom mentioned that he will share November 2020 minutes for the January meeting along with the December 2020 minutes.

SUBCOMMITTEE:

Jim presented Chapter 61 rankings and parcel package to Town Manager and Assessor. Jim has no word on when he will be presenting to the Select Board. Tom suggested that the AgComm present as one of our seminar themes. Tom mentioned that although the audience may be limited to parcel owners and abutters of interest, it would be a good opportunity to invite land trusts to give them visibility on land protection partnership opportunities. Nancy asked who has copies of the Chapter 61 parcel rankings. Jim reminded members that he sent a pdf version to members. Jim plans to first present to the Select Board next.

EDUCATIONAL SERIES PRESENTATION:

Jim mentioned that Kate Gervais sent a list of topics. Christine Higginbotham was mentioned as a potential presenter as a garden researcher, historian, and consultant. Jim suggested that presentations and workshops should be practical for a virtual meeting format. It was also mentioned that we have had joint talks with NRCS and WCCD in the past.

NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT:

Jim mentioned that he had not heard back from his outreach to interested candidates. Amy Parker expressed an interest.

AG COMM WEBPAGE / BLOG STATUS:

The Facebook page had an increase of 28% in hits over the past month. A post was made about Lilac Hedge's ranking by Discover Central Massachusetts. Maleah invited members to share topics and events of interest for posting. Jim talked to the Farmer's Market Manager and she polled the members. No one was interested in have a referral from our Facebook page. Maleah asked Jim for a list of vendors so that we can like their Facebook pages so that these vendors show up on our Facebook page.

AG COMM VIDEO UPDATE:

No update.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jim is now representing the AgComm on the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee. Glenda Williamson is leading the Committee's work. Jim has many documents to review in prep for a meeting over the next month. Jim can send a link for the meeting posting. Jim asked if Tom had heard from Glenda Williamson about moving forward with updating the Forest Stewardship Plan. Tom replied that he had not heard from Glenda.

FARMERS MARKET:

See Facebook comments above under AgComm Facebook page.

CENTRAL MASS GROWN:

Maleah reported that Central Mass Grown is offering one-on-one technical assistance to vendors who are engaged in direct to consumer sales. The vendors can find the sign up sheet on Central Mass Grown website.

Nancy asked if the MA Farm Bureau has a foundation that offers grants. Ryan stated that the Farm Bureau does not have a foundation, but does seek grant opportunities. You can find successful grant awards on the MA Farm Bureau Facebook page.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Jim asked if we need to change our meeting format to in-person vs. virtual or our meeting day of the month. There was a consensus to continue with the third Tuesday of the month and continue virtual meetings for the foreseeable future.

Motion made by Maleah and seconded by Nancy to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 7:43pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom O'Shea
Secretary