

## AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEETING

### MINUTES

September 17, 2019

Attendance: Jim Dunn, Chris Hugo, Tom O'Shea, Ryan McKay, Eileen Charbonneau  
(arrived at 7:40 p.m.)

Absent: Maleah Gustafson

In Attendance: Amy Parker & Guest

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE:**

The 61A Category Subcommittee reviewed four parcels with high score deviations and came to a moderate consensus on new scores. The subcommittee will begin cataloging the 61B properties next month.

#### **MINUTES:**

Before Eileen arrived, the members of the AgComm who were present approved the Minutes from the August 2019 meeting. However, Eileen noted that Maleah emailed her earlier in the day with a correction. The discussion on approving the Minutes was reopened. Chris motioned to accept the Minutes with the revision. Ryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **EDUCATIONAL SERIES PRESENTATION:**

Attendance for the presentation on Food Preservation and Safety was zero. Nonetheless, Heidi gave the presentation so that it could be filmed. The video has been posted on Facebook.

The committee discussed what went wrong. It was determined that turnout is better when we collaborate with another town's Agricultural Commission and when we advertise through related organizations. It was also noted that no one saw anything about the presentation in the Landmark. We will check with Maleah to see what she knows about promotion (or lack thereof) in the Landmark. The presentation was held on the evening of the first day of school, which also may have contributed to the non-turnout. The committee discussed the idea that going back to Saturday mornings for presentations may work better.

The next installment of the Educational Series is to be held in early November. The committee brainstormed ideas for upcoming presentations which included: Edible Landscaping; Flower Production; Design Tips for Getting the Most Growing from Small Spaces; Growing Hops for Micro-breweries and Home Brewers; and Tool Sharpening and Care. The last was chosen for the November presentation. Eileen will contact Tom Kelleher, Curator and Research Historian at Old Sturbridge Village to see if he is available to lead this hands-on workshop in early November.

#### **FARMERS MARKET:**

The new banner has been purchased and has been hung. Market Manager, Leslie Kelley, expressed her thanks to the Agricultural Commission for the new banner.

**ELECTION OF NEW VICE CHAIR:**

Jim began as the new Chair of the Agricultural Commission at this meeting. He called for volunteers or nominations for a new Vice-Chair. Chris Hugo volunteered. A vote was taken and he was unanimously accepted.

Eileen will continue as the Secretary.

Jim suggested making each position two-year terms, but without term limits.

**CENTRAL MASS GROWN:**

Jim attended the Orchard Evening Fundraiser at Tougas Farm in Northborough. Drinks, locally raised meat, vegetables, and fruit were offered to guests. He approximated a turnout of about 100. He stated that the event was good and very interesting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

There is still a position open on the Agricultural Commission. Last night Eileen emailed pertinent information to Kent Rissmiller, who may be interested. Jim charged the commission members with trying to recruit a new member and offer potential names at the next meeting. There is also the possibility of advertising for a new member, but the Commission would rather attempt to recruit someone on our own before taking that step.

A discussion ensued regarding resurrecting the Agricultural Commission Newsletter. The alternative of a blog was suggested. Jim will check on the Town's Social Media policy. If its allowable, running a blog from the Town's website might be an option.

More advertising on the AgComm's Facebook page was requested. In particular, a request was made for advertising for the Farmer Adventure Weekend (October 13 & 14) sponsored by Central Mass Grown in which two Holden farms (The Farm at SummitWynds and Lilac Hedge Farm) are participating.

A question regarding spraying for mosquitoes came up. It was determined that Holden had not been sprayed. Holden is not a member of the Mosquito Control District. Since EEE mosquitoes have been found in Holden and Holden is in the Moderate Risk Level, it will be requested of the Town that if they do decide to spray that advance notice is given so that local beekeepers can protect their hives and/or request to file for exclusion.

On a motion made by Ryan, seconded by Chris, the meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Charbonneau  
Secretary