

Concord Agriculture Committee
Select Board Meeting Room, 22 Monument Sq.
January 9th, 2020
7:00 PM

Present:

Happy Goethert, chair
Brian Cramer, member
Steve Verrill, member
Emily Wheeler, member
Lise Holdorf, clerk

Meeting called to order at 7:12

News about farms and farmers

Lise participated in a press conference at the State House yesterday announcing new statewide legislation that will allow towns to levy real estate transfer fees to raise funds for affordable housing without having to petition for home rule (so the real estate transfer fees approved at last year's Town Meeting wouldn't need special legislative approval).

Steve saw a house on the Acton line for under \$500,000 with a failed septic system. Happy has seen several houses with similar septic issues and they are not appealing to towns to buy because of the extreme expense of remedying.

Brian shared that Hutchins Farm has been transforming a house that used to be a rental house into 3 units (all are 2 bedroom units) for farm workers. The new assistant manager, the new employee, and Brian will all have separate units in the new house.. Brian's old house will be transferred to another trust. They have hired a new employee to manage the orchard and help with general management and equipment operation. They are working on transforming their orchard from 10 acres (which has been difficult to manage) to a 2 acre dwarf tree orchard

There was a community meeting this past fall about how to use the land at the NMI/Starmet Superfund site at 2229 Main Street. Creating some farmer housing on the land was one suggestion.

World Farmers from Lancaster has partnered with the Thoreau Club to distribute CSA shares at the club. It is an organization that works with immigrant farmers.

Happy shared that Mr. Rotundo is having some health struggles.

Happy reported that most of the Ag Day expenses have now been reimbursed.

Steve said they had a busy October and November, but since then sales have been down. They ended up selling 140 Christmas trees to Millbrook after they sold out of their trees following the Boston Globe article.

He also shared that through the Rotary Club they are doing a fundraiser for a Habitat for Humanity project on Main Street that will be affordable housing. They are possibly going to try to buy another piece of state-owned land right next door.

Steve said that on BBC news he heard that 40 year old tractors are increasing in value in the US. Newer tractors are hard to repair yourself (it's more computerized). Steve said they were happy to get their hands on an older tractor recently.

Spring Forum

Emily found a copy of What's Growing in Concord. The film is from 10 years ago, so screening could be followed by a panel of farmers updating what's going on on each property. Lise and Melissa can follow up on McGrath, BJ Dunn could follow up on Palumbo. Dan Latham produced the film. Ag Committee members will try to contact him for permission to show it.

Tuesday, March 24th was selected as the date for the forum at Harvey Wheeler.

Brian will talk to Liza about putting the event on the website. Lise will work on flyers.

Will there be a door prize to be split among winners? Food?

CCTV filmed last year's forum. Emily will ask CCTV about getting permission for showing What's Growing in Concord, as well as accessing last year's forum. One of the segments shows Patrick's asparagus cradle for bunching and cutting. Steve will see if he can find one to bring to the forum.

The future of farming in Concord is discussed on the film - perhaps the panel could discuss how it's panned out. What does the future look like now?

Wholesale farming used to be more prevalent in Concord, but it is less common now.

Happy remembered that the Concord Museum also had a film about Concord farms. She will follow up with a neighbor who works there.

Event Title:

Film Screening: What's Growing in Concord

Ten years on.

Brian thinks he might have an email contact for Dan Latham, so he will try to get in touch with him. Emily will get more copies of the DVD.

Approve Minutes

December minutes were approved as amended.

Concord Climate Action Network's coffee on Tuesday (7:30am at Harvey Wheeler) will be about the Sustainable Concord vision report.

Emily shared the notes from her discussion with the consultant for Sustainable Concord.

Next meeting

February 13th, 7pm at the Assessors office.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24

Minutes submitted by Lise Holdorf

Minutes approved and submitted by Carolyn Goethert, chair

Feb 18, 2020