



Ag Committee Minutes for April 13th 2023 meeting via Zoom

Attendees:

Melissa Maxwell, co-chair, Barrett's Mill Farm
Liza Bemis, co-chair, Hutchins Farm (taking minutes in Joe's absence)
Steve Verrill, member, Verrill Farm
Happy Goethert, member, Scimone Farm
Grace Scimone, associate member, Scimone Farm
Dan Schmid, member, Walden Woods Farm
Brian Cramer, Hutchins Farm
Lise Holdorf, Barrett's Mill Farm
Lois Suarez, pollinator committee
Chip Poutasse, Brigham Farm
Polly Vanasse, Gaining Ground

7:07 PM meeting opened, Melissa chaired, Liza took minutes in Joe's absence

Review Minutes: No changes, Steve motioned to approve, seconded by Dan, Minutes approved.

News about Concord Farms and Farmers: Peas are up at Hutchins. Brian said Steve is the one who made him aware of the benefits of planting peas early. If you get them in early, peas seem to miss some of the maggot issues that seeds planted a little later in the spring can have. Hutchins, Verrill, and Walden woods all irrigated today. It's very dry out. Barrett's Mill is going to start doing that soon too if the weather doesn't change. Brian said he was going to water some beds to get the weeds to come up so he can use the flame weeder on them. Discussion about the flame weeder and its pros and cons – it doesn't work well with grass seed.

Dan took Brian's advice and is watering his garlic for bigger heads. Discussion about garlic planting. Most folks plant in plastic, as recommended by extension. A farmer that Brian bought seed garlic from this fall who had monster sized heads recommended mulching on top of the plastic, so Brian tried that this winter with straw. Brian said they also plant their strawberries nearby the garlic so they can water the two crops together and treat them similarly over the winter. They put row cover on top but depending on how good a job they do, it might blow off. Steve said he put a lot of straw on his strawberries this fall but so much of it blew off and he is worried about how the plants were affected by that intense cold snap in February.

Steve planted their first corn today. Their H2A workers won't be here for a bit, so he is hoping the weather will calm down and the asparagus won't be early because they might not have the crew to pick them.

There will be no peaches in New England this summer because of that cold snap in February. Chip reported the Brigham Greenhouses are looking great, but he is still deep in taxes – tax returns are due Tuesday.

Bill Kenny's auction was online, but it was a live auction with an auctioneer. Melissa listened in a little, and Steve did get some winning bids. He reported Bill was happy with the price on most of the items, but some of the bigger ticket items were not what he had hoped for. Bill's plan for this season is

doing ornamental corn stalks which he had a lot of success with last season.

Spring Forum Discussion: It will be Wednesday April 26th in the auditorium at Harvey Wheeler 6-9 PM for set up and breakdown. The event is 7-8:30 for the public.

Melissa, Liza, and Dan went to Harvey Wheeler earlier today to talk to the custodian and learn the sound system and lights, and Dan tested the projector out. It worked well to project right onto the wall. Melissa emailed Sam to see if she has the right cable cord to connect to the projector, and to see if she had any other questions. Steve said he would invite Sam over for dinner prior to the event. Minuteman will be filming the event, and they will put it on YouTube afterwards so we can have a link on our website. Steve will send our flyer to the Lincoln Ag Committee and invite them again. Melissa did talk to Andrew at Clark Farm who was going to invite the Carlisle Ag Committee members. Melissa will ask him to distribute the information a little wider now that we are closer to the event. Steve will bring food and maybe some cider. Grace offered to bring some lemonade, and Liza said she would bring cups. Melissa will reach out to the farmer panelists, Mark, Anna and Steve to make sure they are all set, and to check in with them. Steve will do the welcome and introduction of Sam at the start of the event. At about 8:40 if the panelists are still fielding questions, we should have a way to end the event – Melissa will keep time and can end the evening leaving room for some milling around. Liza will send an email out to all the farms giving them the event information, and the digital flyer asking them to promo the event on their social media/newsletters etc.

If other farms want a table or half a table that is still possible. Gaining Ground wants a table, and Scimone Farm does too. Natural Resources might want a table? Or at least give out some information? Melissa will check in with Delia. Hutchins and Verrill will bring some seedlings just for display. Steve will ask the Pollinator Committee if they would like a table. Melissa will bring the Ag Committee farm maps, and a clipboard for if anyone wants to be added to the Ag Committee email list. We have access to the building at 6pm, and if anyone can come and help set up tables/chairs, anytime after 6:30 would be great!

Other business: Liza said the town has all the Ag Day paperwork and is extremely likely to officially sign off on everything, but they asked for us to check back in after May 1st, Liza will follow up.

Steve asked if we would like to tour another farm? He suggested Marshall Farm as the next potential one. Steve said he would contact Ricky and see if that was possible.

Public Comment: Lois reiterated how great it was to be included at the Colonial Gardens' tour, and how much the pollinator committee learned. She also suggested we talk to the Fowler library seed borrowing staff about maybe promoting this event for us. She also suggested the library might be a good partner for future talks and as a nice space for events. Liza will send an email to Fowler about promoting the spring forum.

Next meeting: Set for May 11th at 7pm on zoom.

Liza motioned to adjourn, Steve seconded.
Meeting ended 8:05 P.M.