

Concord Agriculture Committee
Thursday, June 14th, 2018 7:15pm
Assessor's Office, 24 Court Lane

Present:

Brian Cramer, member
Happy Goethert, chair
Lise Holdorf, member
Emily Wheeler, member
Jo-Ann Lovejoy, associate member
Steve Verrill, member

Meeting called to order at 7:07

Emily moved to approve Happy Goethert as the 201802019 Ag committee chair.

Minutes

February and May minutes were approved as amended.

News about farming

Happy was at Brigham Farm and they were picking strawberries. Brian thinks Hutchins' strawberries have peaked. Hutchins plants both matted row and fall-planted strawberries. Steve has 1-year old, 2-year old and 3-year old beds and the 2nd year bed is doing the worst. Brian used to keep plants for 2 years but stopped because of decreased yields and foliar diseases. Barrett's Mill also only keeps strawberry plantings for one year.

The HIP program is now funded, allowing SNAP recipients to use benefits to purchase vegetables from local farms with matching funding that reduces the cost of the food to SNAP recipients. Hutchins almost left the Belmont farmers market but their sales doubled last year due to the HIP program.

Potato beetles are not peaking yet. Brian bought Trident, Entrust and Mycotrol ES to control potato beetles. They are also growing an experimental crop of golden berries.

Farm, Food and Garden update and developing mission statement

There is a meeting Friday June 15th. Jo-Ann met with Kim Wass, Brooke Redmond and Joan Daniels to discuss the budget. Jo-Ann sent an email to Dudley Goar and the Stone Soup committee with the budget and a request for funds for the food truck. They are also following up with previous donors. They all agreed to get together in October after the fair to put together a template for fundraising and marketing for following years. Jo-Ann is not sure whether or not Saltbox will want to use the food truck.

Brian will be communicating with the chefs in town about food specials. Emily reiterated the importance of promoting the restaurants at the fair.

Once they know whether or not they have funding from Stone Soup, they will follow up with previous donors. If there is funding from Stone Soup, previous donors will still be invited to contribute, but it may be held on to for the following year or be used for something else.

Brad Hubbard-Nelson from Concord CAN has been the treasurer for Food Farm and Garden Fair funds in the past. The Ag Committee can't be the banker of the funds. Jo-Ann suggested

that if they provide a grant for the Food Farm and Garden Fair, Stone Soup could be the fiscal agent for the Fair - they could hold onto the funds and pay invoices and receipts. It would simplify the process.

Brooke suggested the boilerplate information for future fairs could be stored on the Concord-Carlisle Food Collaborative websites. There could potentially be a way to archive the information on a Town website. Lise suggested storing the information on the Google Drive would also be a good resource, as anyone could be invited to access it and the committee would have complete control of it.

Happy proposed that Emily and Jo-Ann work on the exact wording for a mission statement for the weekend so that in the fall the Ag Committee can use the statement to determine their role in the weekend.

Other Business

Brian said the Pollinator Committee will meet next Tuesday (June 19th). The committee is mainly looking into pesticide use in Concord and the potential impact on bee populations. Some farmers in Concord use neonicotinoids, but it is unknown how many residents or landscapers or golf courses are using neonicotinoids. There also isn't a way to require anyone to provide that information unless they are on Town-owned land. Brian and Steve noted that the evidence about neonicotinoids' impact on pollinators is inconclusive and that colony collapse disorder has many potential causes. Jo-Ann noted that there is a theory that multiple factors interacting including bacterial disease and pesticide exposure cause bees to lose their memory and not be able to find their hive.

Happy brought up the idea of approaching the new reporter at the Concord Journal to get more View from the Fields columns published again. She also checked on green cards and there have not been many submitted for the Ag Committee. She would like to suggest the Town write an article encouraging more people to submit green cards to join Town committees, as well as promote green cards at the Ag Day market. She would like to send an email to everyone who has submitted a green card to attend a meeting. She also got a list of all 61A properties in Concord and suggested inviting them to meetings as well. Happy would also like to include all farmers in town on the emails announcing meetings.

Next meeting July 12

Happy has also reserved the Assessor's room for the following dates: August 9th, September 13th, October 11th, November 8th, December 13th.

Minutes approved on H. Goethert 8/13/18 _____