

Concord Agriculture Committee
Thursday, August 9th, 2018 7:00 pm
Assessor's Office, 24 Court Lane

Present:

Brian Cramer, member
Happy Goethert, chair
Lise Holdorf, clerk
Emily Wheeler, member
Steve Verrill, member
Bill Kenney, visitor
Melissa Maxwell, visitor
Nick Pappas, visitor, Long Range Plan Committee

Meeting called to order at 7:02

Approve minutes

July 2018 and June 2018 minutes were approved as amended.

News about farming

Hutchins Farm was robbed again last week early in the morning. After the first robbery, they made some changes, including putting up a camera. Brian thinks based on the tape and other clues that it may have been the same perpetrator. The detective investigating the case said that there had been a rash of farm stand robberies recently.

Long Range Plan Committee final report

Concord's Long Range Plan was recently completed and Nick Pappas, a member of the committee, attended to share information about the final report, particularly as it pertains to agriculture. Housing and succession were the primary concerns submitted to the Long Range Planning Committee by the Ag Committee. The Long Range Plan is a 10-year plan for Concord. 70% of items from the 2005 plan were either completed or in the process of being completed, which is a good rate. For the most recent plan, the committee received a lot of submissions and input. They based some of their plan after the West Concord plan because it was successful in pushing developers towards the type of development the community wanted.

The economic vitality section (which addresses bringing people to town) had some items relevant to Concord farmers. Page 75 of Section 3 mentions town-sponsored development of housing for seasonal farm workers. Nick suggested the Ag Committee engage with developers and attend public meetings with developers to try to get affordable housing for seasonal farm workers when developments are near farm land. The Town seems willing to adjust zoning to provide for more affordable housing.

Ag Day update

Brian reported that he has sent out emails to restaurants about the food specials and is awaiting responses. Jo-Ann reported to Happy that the Garden Club is doing a display in the Concord Bookshop window. Concord Museum is also interested in having a table at the market. They are planning an Open House 1-3pm at Wright Tavern and would like to have hands-on activities in front of the tavern focused on the history of farming.

Bill Kenney proposed bringing his bean picker to the market so that people can see the wholesale growing side of Concord farms. Bill Kenney harvested 250,000 pounds of beans this year, 95% were wholesaled to Market Basket. There are several wholesale operations in town, including Bill, Jerry Cupp and Eric Nelson. With the extreme heat this year, Bill said that he starts harvesting at 2am to get the harvest finished by 7:30, when it starts to get so hot that it affects the quality of the beans.

Brian suggested bringing a video of the machine in operation to show at the market. Bill said he does have a video. The picker could be placed at the end of the market by the triangle. Brian suggested that the bean picker be placed in such a way that late comers can still get in.

Mark Cogdon from Saltbox Farm confirmed that they were attending and asked if it would be okay if they sold pastries again this year. Emily wondered if Reasons to Be Cheerful would attend. She will contact Wade Rubinstein about it.

Happy spoke with Concord Police and said that the officer wanted to confirm that no one can come before 9am and all stalls must be gone by 3pm.

Emily is working on the permit for the banner and is communicating with Andrew Mara about getting permission to put up the sandwich board on the green across from Wright Tavern.

The farm passport was discussed. Steve suggested that each farm could contribute a prize for the farm passport winner. Entrants would have to get stamps from 6 different farm stands to be eligible for a prize. Happy suggested leaving all the farm stands on the passport, but only leaving boxes for a stamp on the farm stands that agree to participate. There will be no age minimum for participation and it won't be necessary to make a purchase to get a stamp, you just need to visit the farm stand. The prize will be \$50 worth of "farm bucks" to be redeemed at any participating farm stand of the winner's choice. There will be a sticker on each "farm buck" denomination. Three winners will be drawn.

Emily asked about farm tours. Verrill will do a 6am corn picking. Barrett's Mill will do a machinery tour at 10am. Hutchins will do a tour at 1pm and Emily will ask Marshall if they will do a 3:30pm tour again.

Happy talked to Chip Poutasse from Brigham Farm, and he said he might not be able to make the market as he is short on workers and has the Maynard market the same day. Happy was unsure if Brigham Greenhouse would attend.

Public Comment and other business

Happy has been working on getting a View from the Fields article in the Concord Journal. She has also contacted Action Unlimited.

Jen Verrill would like to increase farmer participation at Stone Soup. She would like each farm to set up an informational table at the event. She could use some more help from the farmers and would like more farmers to attend. She is planning a more informal set-up with hors d'oeuvres. Bill suggested seating the farmers at a special table so that attendees would know who the farmers are. Steve has a cast iron cauldron and would like to set it up, put a stone in it and let people throw vegetables into it.

Next meeting September 13th

Meeting adjourned at 8:55

Minutes submitted by Lise Holdorf

Minutes approved _Oct 18, 2018

C. Goethert, Ag Committee chair_____