



Ag Committee Meeting Minutes

October 12th 2023 at 7pm via Zoom

Attendees:

Melissa Maxwell, co-chair, Barretts Mill Farm.
Steve Verrill, Member, Verrill Farm
Dan Schmid, Member, Walden Woods Farm
Joe Rogers, Associate Member, Clerk
Grace Scimone, Associate Member, Scimone Farm
Happy Goethert, Member, Scimone Farm
Mary Hartman, Select Board

Chair of the meeting: Melissa
Meeting called to order 7:07

Review Minutes: Review of minutes of September 14th : Steve moved to approve as written. Seconded by Dan. Minutes Approved.

News of farms and farmers:

Dan and Steve lamented rainy weekends 13 out of 16 weeks. Dan lost healthy carrots to rotting in wet soil. Steve lost all his pumpkins to wetness and had to buy replacements. Dan did not operate his farm stand this summer due to his knee operation and excessive rain ruining crops. He Just did CSA this year.

Melissa reported a decent year. Had to reseed spinach three times because of excess rain but eventually got a good crop. Steve now grows less spinach and more Swiss chard. Brian agrees spinach is too unpredictable. Hard to germinate and this fall the crop was hit by leaf miners. Potatoes did well in the Peter Spring field but needed dry days to harvest. Otherwise the potatoes come up caked in mud. Grace had a good enough year and now that fields are starting to dry out may plant winter rye. It also came up that Bill Kenney had retired and was moving to western Massachusetts.

Cell Phone Antenna update: Mary reports that Tricon church site still unresolved.

Officer elections:

Melissa reported that Liza was willing to remain as co-chair. Dan said he is willing to co-chair with Liza. And Grace said she is willing to become clerk.

Steve nominated Dan as co-chair. Happy seconded. Vote unanimous.

Dan nominates Liza to co-chair. Steve seconded. Vote unanimous.

Dan nominates Grace for Clerk. Joe seconds. Vote unanimous.

Pick Date for 2024 Ag Day: Date for next Ag Day proposed by Happy to be Sept 7th 2024. Dan Seconded. All in favor.

Ag Day nonprofit participation: Participation of non profits in Ag day is discussed to prevent non-agriculture issues from distorting the proper purposes of Ag day. Language may be put into the application requiring the non-profits to declare how their purpose at Ag day relates to and helps promote local agriculture. Melissa will draft something to start.

Bag fee exemption language for town meeting: An amendment to the original checkout bag fee article for town meeting would add an exemption for Farmstands and farmers markets. Melissa proposes accepting the new draft article as written by Chris. Joe seconds. Vote is unanimous. It will go to town meeting to be voted on.

Spring Forum Ideas: possible subjects. 4 suggestions: GMO vs non-GMO, Climate Change, Compost and Weeds. Brian- Climate change. Farms could help or hinder. Compost? Steve: tested compostable containers at farm stand (made of corn). Brian plastic mulch that is supposed to be bio-degradable but really isn't and in the end can't be used on an organic farm. Instead, he must take up the plastic mulch each fall. Dan had bad experience buying organic compost that had bits of plastic in it. Grace and Melissa had good experiences with the product from the same supplier. Dan reports Nut Sedge invading his fields. It loves wet soil says Steve. Brian suggested the speaker for the forum should be from academia as it was last year with Sam.

Other Business: Mary brought up the subject of finding new members to the committee. Discussion of possibilities. Names were suggested and follow-up volunteered. Mary suggested to solicit the community gardens members. Joe will talk with Rogers group. Melissa will discuss with Delia. To merge Ag committee with other committees brought skeptical response.

Public Comment: None.

Next meeting: Mary Hartman not available Nov 9th so Happy proposed meeting November 16th. All agreed.

Dan moved to adjourn the meeting and Grace seconded. Meeting adjourned 8:29 PM