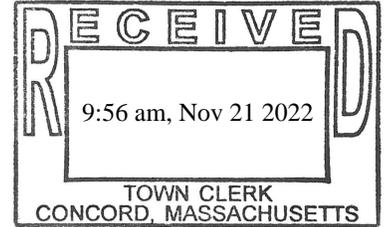


Minutes for Agriculture Committee meeting Thursday, October 13, 2022 via Zoom

Attendees:

Melissa Maxwell, co-chair, Barrett's Mill Farm
Dan Schmid, member, The Walden Woods Project Farm
Steve Verrill, member, Verrill Farm
Happy Goethert, member, Scimone Farm
Joe Rogers, associate member, clerk
Grace Scimone, associate member, Scimone Farm
Brian Cramer, Hutchins Farm
Mark Congdon, Salt Box Farm



Meeting Called to order at 7:04pm, chaired by Melissa.

Review Minutes: July minutes were reviewed and it was noted needed a spelling correction. Melissa motioned to approve with corrections, Dan seconded, July minutes were approved as corrected.

News from about Concord Farms and Farmers: Melissa said the frost came reasonably timely this year and so it could be planned for. It's a clear signal of the end of the season. Time for sowing the winter rye.

Mark Congdon at Saltbox described challenges of "no-till" this year. It's labor intensive and requires having extra volunteer labor. Gaining Ground has 1,500 volunteers. Salt Box is adjusting from producing for CSA to doing more direct farm to table and possibly more markets. Considering more use of landscape fabric and shade fabric and maybe working low till rather than no till.

Happy at Scimone experimented with planting a variety of types of garlic and found customers very responsive to the choices. Brian reports buying seed garlic with unpredictable results. Cheaper seed garlic produced better than expensive one. Barrett's Mill irrigated its garlic this spring and got much improved result. It's garlic planting time right now.

Ag Day 2023: The date will almost certainly be on September 9th, there are no known conflicts with this date.

Quick update on Concord Farm Videos: Saltbox video is up with good reviews. The Walden Woods Project had one visit and will get another to film their manager. Marshall Farm filming is being re-scheduled.

Spring Forum Ideas: Brian suggested the topic of "tillage". The idea was well received.

Brian mentioned the topic might have a historical perspective including Pre-Columbian tilling, and how it was done in colonial times up to the present with discussions of "limited" and "no-till" practices. Melissa said the tillage topic would be interesting to garden clubs and the public at large. Happy suggested broadening the discussion topic from "tillage" to "soil Health" in general. Brian mentioned that no-till is pervasive out west but is heavily herbicide dependent. Going no-till also has risks to the growing season as the soil is not turned to address moisture and temperature concerns. Steve shared that some fields are unsuited for limited tilling. Soil density, porosity and aeration are factors.

Melissa brought up the need to identify speakers who can present this talk, such as maybe someone from UMass? Steve will inquire about possible speakers. Melissa will look into if the American Farmland Trust might have a speaker.

Dan said that Eric Nelson at Cucurbit Farm in Acton has been trying no till. He might be a speaker. Mark Congdon revealed that he has given a presentation at the Concord Library about soils that was well attended by garden club members and gardeners. He's willing to be a panelist. Melissa mentioned that NRCS has a new representative who could be a speaker? All of us should think of possible speakers.

Other business: Pumpkin smash plans of Mothers Out Front are unknown.

Public Comment: none

Next Meeting: Scheduled for November 10th on Zoom.

Motion to Adjourn the meeting by Happy, seconded by Dan.

Meeting adjourned 7:56 PM