

AGRICULTURE COMMISSION MINUTES

August 3, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sarah M Silk, Chair; Lawreen Strauch, Vice-Chair; Marge Strunk, Wendy Rodgers; Katy Peternel; David Strauch;

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Rodgers, excused

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Macy Gotthardt

ALTERNATES ABSENT: KURT DEVYLDER, excused

I. Approve Minutes of 6-1-23:

Sarah Silk, Chair, opened the meeting at 6:45 at the Library. She apologized to the members for the error of the date on the Agenda.

Lawreen commented that the name of the movie the Ag Comm had shown a few years ago was "Forgotten Farms".

With a motion from Katy Peternel and a second from Marge Strunk, the Minutes were unanimously approved. There was a brief discussion about the Town website which incorrectly states the Ag Comm meets the 1st Wednesday of the month.

T

II. July 4th Parade:

Sarah displayed the American Farmland Trust bumper stickers (100 ea) that she had received just prior to the parade.

Lawreen and David Strauch had prepared a float with banners for the Ag Comm, an old hay rake, a stuffed farmer, the "barn" mock up, fresh plants, bales of hay, a fiberglass cow, various farm implements, flags and patriotic bunting.

Various grandchildren had passed out candy and daughter, Lawrel Spera had passed out stickers to those that requested one.

The float won the top prize for the division.

Katy reported she had checked on legislation relative to banning plastic bags. The first bill was 1990, next came 2016, followed by 2017, 2019 (addressed plastic straws, 2020 (surcharge for the use of plastic bags), 2020 straw bill tabled, 2020 plastic film.

Lawreen asked if the bills addressed plastics on a town by town level with Katy responding it was a state level. Katy said it would have to be voluntary at a town level.

Wendy noted Goodwill no longer uses bags, but offers re-use plastic ones for sale.

Sarah noted she had gone to ME last winter and they don't use plastic bags, offer thin paper for you have to pay for. PA and Ohio are the same and locally BJ's does not bag at all, nor Aldis per Macy.

Several people commented that even grain/feed bags are plastic. Marge added that shavings come that way now.

III. Updates: Farmers Market (Nadine San Antonio)/CCCD (Catherine Default):

Sarah reported that a return email indicated that Catherine was out of office 7/28 thru 8/6.

Nadine sent the following information: customer numbers are up since the move from Clark Park; vender numbers have increased by 25%; more meat farmers has reduced sales for a couple of long-time vendors. Various fundraisers are in process: the end of July it was "Food for All" by the Mt Washington Valley Eaters & Growers; "Soup to Bowl" benefits people who may or may not get SNAP. Farmers and Bakers had a sales boost last year of \$2,000 due to that project. August 17th, highlights local non-profits in a partnership between Carroll County Coalition for Public Health and Region 9 Early Childhood Partnership will offer vouchers to those attending all the non-profits represented. September is vouchers for Veterans month. All month long any veteran will be given a \$20 voucher to purchase food at the market.

IV. Old Business/Any Other Business:

Wendy passed around a flyer from the US Dept. of AG in MA educating people to the dangers of African Swine Fever. It can be spread by contamination of farm equipment or vehicles, clothing or shoes, feed, feral swine, sick pigs or garbage feeding.

Currently, there are no cases found in the US. Humans cannot get ASF, but they can spread it from farm to farm.

There was discussion about large companies having their live pigs processed in China, some may be off-shore in factory boats such that disclaimers can be made to hide any mainland China connection.

Dave Strauch noted when swine flu was bad, feed stores would not deliver to farms due to fear of cross-contamination spread by the delivery vehicles and drivers' boots.

Sarah asked members about topics of interest for speakers for the coming meetings. Wendy was interested in someone to address beekeeping. There was a brief discussion about a possible contact at the Farmer's Market.

V. Next Meeting Date – Adjourn:

It was agreed that the next meeting date would be in October. Possibly the 1st Thursday, 10-5-23, or the 2nd Thursday, 10-12-23 depending on availability of a speaker.

Sarah will notify members as soon as a date is established.

Macy Gotthardt noted that the Town web site states that the Ag Comm meets the 1st Wednesday of the month which is in error.

Sarah advised she would get in touch with David Baker to make a correction to 1st Thursday night. She will check on whether the American Farmland sticker and the poster from US Dept of Ag can be put on the site with this month's Minutes.

With a motion from Katy and a second from Lawreen, the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah M Silk, Ag Comm Secretary

Ag8-23