

WOLFEBORO AGRICULTURE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

July 7, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sarah M Silk, Chair, Lawreen Strauch, Vice-Chair, David Strauch, Katy Peternal, Wendy Rodgers

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Rodgers (excused), Marge Strunk (unexcused)

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Macy Gotthardt

ALTERNATES ABSENT: Kurt DeVylder (excused)

BOS LIAISON: Dave Senecal - absent

GUESTS PRESENT: Catherine Dufault, CCCD, Maggie Stier, NH Preservation Alliance/Wolfeboro Heritage Commission

I. Approve Minutes 5-5-22:

Sarah Silk, Chair, opened the meeting just after 7PM in the Library introducing the speaker for the program.

Macy Gotthardt, alternate, was appointed to sit for David Rodgers.

Sarah read an email from David Rodgers regarding the May Minutes: "Apparently there was confusion about my vote. You asked if I abstained and I said Aye, meaning yes I abstained, but it must have gotten mixed up and taken as a yes vote."

Macy Gotthardt made a motion to accept the May Minutes with that amendment. Katy Peternel made a second, and the Minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

Sarah noted that Lawreen and David Strauch were on their way and the next item of business would be Catherine's report.

Item III. Carroll County Conservation District Representative Update-Catherine Dufault:

Catherine Dufault advised that the best steps to take regarding the dry conditions was to reduce erosion during watering, reduce evaporation, use high tunnels if possible.

She spoke of a Climate Change Mitigation Grant program for farmers. Options are solar wells in the fields, size of operation, number of years in business, and several other qualifiers apply. She will email the information to the Ag Comm members.

Sarah noted she had a news release from WMUR on her phone today with Carroll County is now listed as moderate drought from the US Drought Monitor which tracked from Tues 6-29 thru Tues 7-5 as of 8 AM. It is abnormally dry for 41% of the state with the exception near the Canadian border.

There was a brief discussion about rain barrel availability: in spring Earth Day celebrations at GALA, Tractor Supply, and Wolfeboro solid waste thru NHRRA also around Earth Day and Town Clean Up Day.

Catherine added that maintained soil health, cover crop, irrigation with no channeling off the field helps, but there is no immediate relief for the extreme weather.

Avian Flu update: Sarah noted seals had been diagnosed with the disease and Wendy Rodgers had seen a report in the Portsmouth area about sea ducks.

IV. Farmers Market Update – Nadine SanAntonio:

Sarah had communications from Nadine and noted that the Farmers Market was Thursdays which make it difficult for Nadine to attend because the closing up is lengthy. Sarah asked if the Ag Comm could be supportive in any way. An area perhaps needing assistance from the Ag Comm regards signage. There is a lot of “put them up, take them down” activity with 16 day limits even though the Market is every week.

Sarah had inquired if Kurt DeVlyder had knowledge of State regulations due to the agriculture nature of the Farmers Market and the ability for off-site directional signs of long duration for farm stands possibly covering the Market signs as well. He was not aware of such.

Catherine suggested Sarah contact the Municipal Assoc. Sarah will contact them as she has utilized them with inquiries on other town boards for general state regulations. She will approach Jason in Codes Enforcement for more information as well.

Sarah reported that the first 2 weeks at the Market were slow due to weather, but the following weeks saw huge crowds making the trip to the Nick. People are unaware of the additional parking by the maintenance building and cause a bottleneck near the entrance exacerbated by cars parked along the dog park fence which is part of the traveled way. They utilize dog park spots as well.

Maggie Stier noted the DAR (Nancy Black) had gone to the BOS regarding signs in front of the monument at Brewster field which will now be limited to 4 signs.

Wendy asked about the number of local farmers as vendors. Sarah advised that they have always been listed on the Market site on line with items for their booths and farm locations.

(Lawreen and David Strauch arrived @ 7:20.)

Item II. Preserving Old Barns, Maggie Stier, NH Preservation Alliance:

Maggie Stier, also on the Wolfeboro Heritage Commission, presented a power point program (accompanied by several handouts) with examples of old barns with elaboration on the other buildings that possibly are covered as well. They must be a minimum of 75 years old.

Maggie reviewed the 79-D Discretionary Preservation Easements document attached to the Agenda packet. The Preservation Alliance is not regulatory. Examples of 7 to Save, the Town Hall project, and 4 barns were shown within Wolfeboro (a 5th barn near Macy's burned down a few years ago.) The Preservation Easement is a 10 year increment and has a withdrawal penalty pro-rated to the number of years remaining.

Questions arose from Catherine and others about public access to barns – not part of the program although some people are proud of their efforts and one on Cotton Mtn enjoys showing the historic components of his building – the edifice should be viewable from the road.

Maggie noted Center Harbor had done a town-wide barn survey, hired a consultant and now has photographs and history of ownership on old barns.

Lawreen Strauch spoke of the book by the Farm Bureau Women, 2 copies are in the Wolfeboro Library, one was donated by the Ag Comm, covering farms of 100 years duration

Catherine was interested if there was a template available to carry out barn surveys in other towns with Maggie responding some by volunteers and others with paid consultants (less costly with initial ground work done by volunteers) also service historical societies, scan photos and documents. Maggie will send Catherine information.

Katy Peternel asked about the duration with Maggie addressing original assessment continuing and speaking to the tax advantage.

Lawreen asked about the Heritage Comm role. Maggie stated it was an education and advocacy group under state law, not regulatory. Variations in towns, some do plaques on buildings. Wakefield buys property, makes renovations and sells, old Garvin building, train station, Spinney Grange. In Wolfeboro, the Pickering House had squatters, was abandoned, got the Cooks involved and assisted its renewal. The Freight House is another example, by the RR Station.

(Catherine left at 8:15pm.)

V. Old Business/Any Other Business:

There was no old business.

Katy had no legislative updates.

Lawreen advised the Carroll County Farm Bureau was in sabbatical as membership is down, the state level wants the local groups to pay for recruitment such as billboards etc, but the funds are not available.

Katy noted there are fewer farms, but small homesteaders are supporting to agriculture.

There was a brief discussion about the costs of insurance for farmers and producers of poultry.

There was a brief discussion regarding a budget for the Ag Comm. Sarah noted in the past the members had donated for the “No More Farms” movie with public donations helping to cover the cost. Members also paid for the donated Farm Bureau Women’s Farm book and toward the commemorative tree for Dennis DeVlyder with Parks and Rec funding, and Ag members planting the tree to complete that project.

Pre-pandemic plans to purchase tree seedlings from the state with Earth Day Celebration tie-ins would need some funds if planned for the future. Due to the absence of the BOS representative. Sarah noted the following process regarding budgets: a specific use of the funding would go before the T Mgr in Aug/Sept, BOS in Oct, Budget Comm about Nov. Upon approval it would be included in the operating budget.

Wendy wanted to do a scholarship. Lawreen noted the Farm Bureau scholarship had not received applicants. Sarah added the Conservation Commission discontinued their scholarships to an environmental camp for high school students due to conflicting dates with GWRSD finals and lack of interest.

There was a discussion about 4H programs. Katy advised the 4H members did not want to own animals, just depend on the group leaders to supply them for shows. Lawreen spoke to the Remick Museum Cattle Club. Macy spoke about the horse programs and the scale of 1 or 2 animals locally where other states have many more animals. Sarah reminded the group of the Fredricksons trailering their cattle long distances to Hereford competitions in the mid-west where the other contestants had thousands of animals to choose from.

VI. Adjourn:

With a motion from Katy and a second from Dave Strauch. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah M Silk, Secretary