

WOLFEBORO AGRICULTURE COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES 8-5-21

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sarah Silk, Chair; Lawreen Strauch, Vice-Chair; Marge Strunk, Katy Peternel. Blair Moody, Wendy Rodgers (arrived 8PM)

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Rodgers unex

ALTERNATES PRESENT: David Strauch, Alan Frederickson, Kurt DeVyllder, Macy Gotthardt

BOS Liaison: Dave Senecal

I. Approve Minutes 6-1-21:

Chair Sarah Silk, opened the in-person Meeting in the Great Hall at 7:30 PM.

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

With a typo correction by Macy on page 1, attendance (Stauch should be Strauch), she motioned for approval of the 6-1-21 Minutes as amended. Marge Strunk made the second and the vote was unanimous.

II. Meet with Farmers Market Representatives:

As the representative had not yet arrived, the chair went to the following item under New Business.

III. Old Business/Any Other Business:

A notice was sent that a previously scheduled tour of Sherman Farms in Conway to be conducted by Carroll County Conservation District for legislators and stakeholders is rescheduled due to the memorial service for a NH House of Representatives member.

New date is:

Friday, 9-23-2021, 1:00 PM

Sherman Farm, 2670 East Conway Rd, Conway, NH 03813

Topics: where government funds are going, state of NH agriculture, water, lands, and people, an awards ceremony and light fare from local farms.

The event is free, outside, sturdy shoes, weather appropriate attire, **questions may be submitted in advance to CCCD @ 603-901-3003. PLEASE ADVISE THEM IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND.**

II. Meet with Farmers Market Representatives

Sarah greeted Megan Young, Market President, and was advised that Nadine SanAntonio, Market Manager would not be present.

There was a discussion regarding misconceptions that the Carroll County Farm Bureau (CCFB) and Wolfeboro Ag Comm did not fully support the Market. Sarah spoke to the Ag Comm advocating for a local farm a few years ago at a BOS meeting. Ag members belonging to CCFB attested to support for farms and markets.

The reports of the Town being sued and a decision having been made by a judge regarding the location of the Market led to Sarah asking Dave Senecal, as the BOS rep, for verification of such. Dave Senecal reported no case filed in court, complaints made by 2 individuals, an agreement worked out between Town Attny Mark Puffer and their representative, Rick Sager.

She also asked about special event permits issued for the Historical Society flea markets for the same day and time as the Farmers Market. As a former BOS, she had knowledge that new events competing for the same parking spaces as established events were virtually denied to avoid traffic congestion. Currently, 2 such flea markets have conflicted and a 3rd is listed in the Granite State News. Dave Senecal advised that the BOS had approved the flea market with stipulations about off-site parking for vendors similar to the requirements for the Farmers Market. The end result is that the Farmers Market will not be able to return in 2022 to the present location.

There was a lengthy discussion about the unprecedented rise in the local food movement since covid-19 and the increase in attendees. Megan addressed the “out-growing” aspect of the present location.

Various suggestions were made including: the Nick (maybe too far from the center of town for tourists), Foss Field (downtown workers park behind Harvest leaving few spots), Abenaki (distance, although with improvements to the Ice Arena, it would be better in rain and vendors could drive inside).

Currently, the non-profit Farmers Market is exploring various options with the non-profit Nick board. It is hoped that a new location can be determined before the 2021 market season is over to start educating the public to the new spot. A second trolley may help bring buyers to a new location. The Market advertises with the trolley but covid-19 prevented the 2nd one from starting up.

Meghan was asked if she saw a roll for the Ag Comm to support the Market in its move. Kurt DeVlyder asked if the Chamber was offering any assistance. Meghan advised the Market is a member, but has not received any assistance to date. Nadine SanAntonio is the Market Manager and would have a better handle on plans to get the word out when the new location is finalized.

Alan Frederickson, who had vended at the Market earlier in the day, spoke of huge influx of people causing local shoppers to go to his farm because of the inability to find a parking space. Katy Peternel spoke to the traffic jam on Main St. About 6 weeks in mid-summer is the most frequent parking issues.

There were a few questions regarding signage after the move to forward shoppers to the new site. A permanent sign was explored if they move to Rt 28. Sarah asked about one of the blue NH State highway directional signs if the Nick is not an option for a sign. The blue signs can be applied for and covered in the off season. Dave Senecal stated it would be Division 3 DOT. Kurt advised he could share information about number of letters, etc with Megan as he had a file on that. It had been about \$400 for one a few years ago. The application is online with size relative to MPH on the highway.

Megan spoke to an “Every Door Direct Mailing”, (EDDM) offered by the PO. A post card would cover the move of location.

Kurt suggested that Megan be invited to the Ag Comm meetings and become a regular item on the Agenda. Sarah took her contact information.

There was a discussion by Megan about the problems of finding affordable equipment for farmers, especially those starting out; the increased cost of land especially with covid-19 emptying the metropolitan areas. Small farms are going out of business.

Alan agreed it was hard for young farmers, 24/7 hard work; enjoy the lifestyle but it's not lucrative; diversified income streams are necessary. Sarah recalled the movie sponsored by the Ag group, "Forgotten Farms" and the difficulty setting prices on huge farms in the mid-west with little relationship to the costs for small farms in New England.

RETURN TO III. Other Business:

Wendy Rogers had an issue with the arrival date of her Agenda. Sarah noted there is still no new secretary, there was no notification to her of such in advance. All members were emailed at the same time.

Kurt noted DeVlyder farm will be open Sept 1st for pick your own, pumpkins, cider, and baked goods with Cindy at the Farm.

Lawreen asked about using the Library meeting room as they are sound proof making it easier to hear. Sarah will explore the option as the Conservation Commission has swapped to that room.

IV. Adjourn:

With a motion from Marge and a second from Katy the meeting adjourned at 8:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah M Silk, Acting Secretary

Ag8-21