

WOLFEBORO AGRICULTURE COMMISSION MINUTES

March 3, 2022 @ 6:45 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sarah M Silk, Chair; Lawreen Strauch, Vice-Chair; Katy Peternel, Marge Strunk; David Rodgers (arrived 6:55pm); Wendy Rodgers (arrived 7:00pm)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Blair Moody

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Dave Strauch; Kurt DeVlyder (arrived 7:10pm)

ALTERNATES ABSENT: Macy Gotthardt

BOS Liaison: Dave Senecal, absent

Guests: Susan Poirier & Shelly McGee, Wolfeboro Town Gardens representatives

I. Approve Minutes 1-6-22.

Sarah Silk, Chair, opened the meeting at 6:45 PM in the Library meeting room. Dave Strauch was appointed by the chair to fill in for Wendy Rodgers.

Katy Peternel advised that there was a correction to page 3, VI, 3rd paragraph of the January 6th Minutes. The 1st line should say Kurt DeVlyder spoke of the Larson Farms, not Katy.

Dave Strauch noted in paragraph 4 (same section) 1st line, the words "repairs on" should be deleted.

With a motion from Lawreen Strauch and a second from Marge Strunk, the Minutes of January 6 were unanimously accepted as amended.

(NOTE: David Rodgers arrived at 6:55.)

II. Presentation, Susan Poirier & Shelly McGee, Wolfeboro Town Gardens:

Susan Poirier and Shelly McGee were introduced to the members. Susan gave a history of the efforts since 2008 with the Conservation and Vocational Agriculture students improving the area for gardens for people in town. Lack of water prevented early use by residents. (The property has use restrictions in the deed from Greenleaf Whitter.)

Shelly explained the volunteer workforce: donated funds buy seed, Ag students start the plants, Life Ministries Food Pantry has received 10,000 LBS of produce. However, the Pantry is open 2 Wednesdays/month while produce ripen every week. Kingswood Youth Center, the student free food program, and on one occasion, Hope House, have enjoyed an over-abundance of fresh food.

The students learn about dikes, drainage, proper planting of seeds. Visiting Scholars, Royal Thailand Students, at Brewster Academy learn about soil testing.

The Youth Center helped with composting. They get one bed to work and receive that produce..

(NOTE: Wendy Rodgers arrived at 7:00, Sarah appointed Dave Strauch to sit for Blair Moody.)

Susan noted that neighbors have been supportive, donating a lawn mower, saving her from transporting one from her home.

(NOTE: Kurt DeVyder arrived at 7:10 PM.)

There was a brief discussion regarding the removal of garden pests. Marge Strunk asked about potato bugs. Susan replied they plant more nutritious vegetables such as carrots, while relying on hand picking of bugs.

The group coordinates with Spiderweb gardens and their veggie gleaners to avoid duplication of crops, growing cabbage, lettuce, green beans, squash, etc.

Volunteers are needed for planting, mulching, harvesting and putting the beds to bed for the winter.

There was a brief discussion about shade cloth and use of a hoop house. Kurt DeVyder noted Johnnie's Seeds, among others offer them. Dave Strauch asked the size of the hoop house, noting he might have a shade cloth to fit the 20'x16' dimension that Susan gave him.

Sarah thanked them for the attending and presenting the details of their very successful program.

III. Carroll County Conservation District Representative Update-Catherine Dufault

Catherine Dufault advised that the Agriculture Marketing Grant had gone to another entity. She spoke of a Climate Resiliency Grant, alternative energy and a pilot for greatest needs not met by other programs. Equipment for rent had been of interest to the Commission and she mentioned a demo day of equipment in other districts, hoping to get a funding source in 2023 for equipment.

There will be a pollinator week in June, state-wide with identification workshops at various farms.

Kurt DeVyder will have an **apple grafting workshop 4-2-22** (4-3-22 rain date) from 10AM-noon. Currently, 10 of the 16 openings are filled.

Kurt asked about pesticide applicator credit for this workshop. Catherine believed it is not offered.

Sarah asked if Catherine was familiar with the NE Farm Link (CT, ME, VT, and NH) with the mission of connecting farmers with owners of land they might lease for crops, or sell due to the problem of finding available land affordable especially for young and beginner farmers.

The NE Farm Cooperative 3-23, 3-3, 4-6-22 webinar, handouts, resources, register online no fee listed.

IV. Farmers Market Update – Meagan Young (schedule, etc):

Sarah will contact Megan by phone to determine if she is able to attend the next meeting.

V. Old Business/Any Other Business

Rockingham County Wild Duck Disease/Free Range Chickens: Both Sarah and Lawreen Strauch had concerns about Eurasian H5. Sarah read from an article (2-17-22 The Laconia Daily Sun, pg 14) reporting on NH Fish & Game had detected 20 mallards in Rockingham County with the disease for the first time since 2016. Domestic chickens and turkeys in the South and Midwest, 3 flocks, have presented with the avian flu. The strain does not appear to be transmittable to humans. Eastern NH is part of the Atlantic Flyway used by millions of migrating birds. The major concern is for free range poultry which may have interaction with wild birds.

Lawreen noted the Extension Service has information on their website. She emphasized biosecurity as there is waterfowl nasal, oral and manure transfer of disease.

Marge had a female mallard that had come to her yard in past years (it may have been one raised there and flown in the fall) but her birds rejected the bird and it has not been seen lately.

Catherine noted site visits by the state have to sanitize.

Lawreen spoke to the need for booties.

Sarah noted she had been in touch with Brookfield and advised that their Ag Comm had disbanded.

Sarah displayed correspondence NH Preservation Alliance, membership at \$50 is not possible due to lack of a budget. They have 20 Zoom programs, most free. www.nhpreservation.org

See www.nhpreservation.org/webinars for a Preservation Alliance forum prompted by US Postal Service release of a series of barn postage stamps. Catherine commented on old barn lectures in Conway and Moultonborough.

Kurt advised he had attended the Tuftonboro Ag Comm meeting last month. There was a discussion about a barn inventory in that town.

Sarah noted there is a reduction in taxes for barns between 25-75% granted by the Board of Selectmen. [note: Kurt forwarded the following re barn preservation: www.wolfborough.us/sites/g/files/vyhlf4071/f/uploads/79-dpacket2019.pdf it includes information from NH Preservation Alliance 7 the pertinent RSA79-D:7 refers to the 25-27%)

There was a reminder regarding expiring terms. (4-6-22 BOS meeting appointment date)

Catherine will check farm bill regarding energy efficiency and solar panels.

NEXT meeting, Thursday, May 5th, 6:45 PM @ Library. (BOS meeting Wed and Ag Comm on Thurs, no time for new members to be sworn in so meeting in April.)

VI. Adjourn:

With a motion from Marge and a second from Katy, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah M Silk, Acting Secretary