

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AGRICULTURE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 9, 2017

3:30 pm

**City Hall, 2nd Floor
Conference Room**

Members Present:

Sarah Wilton, Chair
Charles Daloz, Vice Chair
Councilor Bettina A. Chadbourne
Aaron Moody
Megan Straughen

Staff Present:

Michele Chalice, Planner

Members not present:

Mark Florenz

1) Call to order

Chair Wilton called meeting to order at 3:38 pm.

2) Approve June 14, 2017 minutes; no July minutes – no quorum

Councilor Chadbourne moved to approve the minutes, Mr. Daloz seconded and it passed by unanimous vote.

3) Response to the Monadnock Region Agriculture Commissioner/Policy Advocacy Training on Thursday, September 28, 2017

Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition (MFCC)-Mr. Daloz s informed committee that MFCC will host a Monadnock Region Agriculture policy/advocacy training event to be held at **Stonewall Farm, Thursday, September 28, 5:30-7:30 pm at 242 Chesterfield Road in Keene**. He said a free dinner will be served. Ms. Chalice asked if the event was open to the public. Mr. Daloz said yes, but specifically geared toward agricultural stakeholders in the Monadnock region. He encouraged the commission to invite anyone who may be interested.

Chair Wilton asked what type of agenda to expect at the event and if there would be hands-on training and presentations. Mr. Daloz said Lorraine Merrell will be a speaker and there would probably be breakout groups and shared information coming out of the groups. Ms. Straughen said the event was advertised in their monthly newsletter and she would look for the advert on her laptop. Ms. Chalice asked Ms. Straughen to please email her with a link when she finds it. Chair Wilton asked Mr. Daloz if there is an agenda available for publication. She stated that her past experiences with MFCC meetings had not been as productive as she would have liked. Ms. Chalice encouraged

Chair Wilton to try attending a meeting with them again because her knowledge base and experience would be of importance to the group. Ms. Straughen stated that she attended a MFCC meeting in the last quarterly forum and she felt tangible results came out of the meeting. She said they discussed grant funding for farmers and the Co-op was already doing that and so there was a pooling of resources and ideas.

Mr. Daloz assured Chair Wilton that they would have a tangible agenda and he would try to secure an agenda packet from key people putting the event together. Chair Wilton said the forums were started 5 years ago per the recommendation of Sustaining Agriculture in the Granite State and all of the agricultural commissions have been around for only 5 years. Ms. Straughen pulled up the website on her laptop and clarified the message for event for members. She quoted from the website, *“Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition invite you to a policy and advocacy workshop....what actions can be taken to support farming locally, regionally and nationally? NH Commissioner of Agriculture, Markets and Food, Lorraine Merrell, Lee Alexander, Durham Agriculture Commissioner and others provide local regional and national tasks for stakeholders supportive of a viable farming future....”*

Ms. Chalice stated that through her experience it is important to continue to support the objectives of organizations with a similar mission to enhance the effectiveness of these initiatives. Chair Wilton asked to keep this item on the agenda for next week. Mr. Daloz agreed that it would be good to have a response at next month's meeting.

4) Response to the Monadnock Farm Tour on Saturday, August 26, 2017

Chair Wilton stated that a **Monadnock Farm Tour will take place Saturday, August 26, 2017** at a number of local farms. Ms. Chalice said the commission would be a great leader for a garden farm tour. Chair Wilton asked if the cost is \$5 per farm or per tour. Mr. Daloz clarified that the cost is \$5 per tour. Chair Wilton said she would pass pamphlets out to her neighbors. Mr. Daloz said many of the farms on the tour are young farms and that many of the older farms are not surviving. Chair Wilton said she sees the effort as drumming up business for farms. Mr. Daloz expressed his enthusiasm for the farm tour event.

5) Promotional Materials for Agriculture Education & Outreach

Chair Wilton reminded the group that developing promotional materials for agriculture education and outreach is one of AGC's priority goals for 2017-2018 for the greater agricultural community. She asked if anyone attended the Pumpkin Festival meeting like they decided at last month's meeting. She stated that per last month's tasks, Mr. Florenz is not present to say if he attended the meeting.

Ms. Straughen clarified that there are two festivals. She stated that **the Fall Festival is Saturday, September 30 from 10 am-4 pm**. She said vendors will be tabling from Railroad Square all the way along the bike path to the amphitheater where there will be live music. She said her boss at the Co-op described the event as centered on the region, businesses, producers and community groups that make it special. Chair Wilton said that sounds like a great message for agriculture. Ms. Straughen said that the **Pumpkin Festival will take place October 29** and will revert back to the old format which is children-centered and the main activity is pumpkin picking. Ms. Chalice asked if they are limiting the amount of pumpkins and school groups. Ms. Straughen said she cannot imagine they would exclude the number of children from participating.

Mr. Daloz suggested to Ms. Chalice that they create a table for these events. Ms. Chalice said she has a poster board for AGC that is not quite finished and that she would be happy to send it back out to the committee to flesh it out. Chair Wilton suggested they first create an agriculture vision for Keene. Ms. Chalice said Mr. Florenz was supposed to finish the wording and she would check with him to see if he has completed a draft. Councilor Chadbourne asked if she could email Mr. Florenz and Ms. Chalice said she could ask him. She said Mr. Florenz could send a draft to Ms. Chalice and she would then send it out to the committee as a resource. She also said there would be talking points with the community with the Chicken brochure.

Chair Wilton suggested having a blank board where the public could write their own ideas about what Keene's future in agriculture should be. She said farms are perfect laboratories for wind and solar generation stations. She stated that they need more ideas than just those of AGC members, so she would like inspiration and feedback from the community. Ms. Chalice suggested having an easel with paper to flip through. She suggested having an initial board with ideas started first to jumpstart people's idea and thoughts. Mr. Daloz asked if the City has a screen to play the ACG video. Ms. Chalice said that the City does not loan those out, but someone could use a tablet or personal laptop. Councilor Chadbourne agreed that it might attract people to have a moving picture component of the table. Ms. Straughen suggested considering the availability of electrical outlets and the glare from the sun blocking people's view. Chair Wilton asked if they could make a motion to have a table at Fall Festival and Pumpkin Festival. Ms. Chalice said she could find out more about registration for either event. Chair Wilton said she could loan a card table for the event. Ms. Chalice said she can contribute the easel from the City. She said she could also get a table from the City but they are very heavy.

Mr. Daloz suggested that next month they have all of the materials together. Ms. Chalice said she can put it down as an agenda item. Chair Wilton suggested putting down bullet points of major core areas for example, agriculture and environmental corridors, on the display board. Ms. Chalice clarified that the public can use the board with those headings to generate new ideas. Ms. Chalice said she would contact Mr. Florenz for his verbiage and then relay that information to the commission. Ms. Chalice said she would print out 50 chicken brochures and the Antioch community garden location summaries to stock the table. Mr. Daloz also suggested having the Cheshire County studies. Ms. Chalice said she could print up a quarter sheet with resource links so that people can take them home. Ms. Chalice said they could check everyone's schedules now to see who is available-- Mr. Daloz volunteered to man the Fall Festival table from 10-12 pm, Mr. Moody volunteered from 12-2 pm, and Chair Wilton committed to 2-4 pm. Chair Wilton suggested that if they are attending the September 28 advocacy and policy event that they could bring their materials to that event. Ms. Chalice said she would put Fall Festival table/supplies coordination on the agenda for next month.

6) Chicken Neighborhood Brochure

Members discussed distribution of chicken brochures at the Fall Festival tabling event in Item 5.

7) New or Other Business

Jobs-Chair Wilton said committee should be thinking of Keene as an agricultural center for jobs. She said she thinks that environmental education along the agricultural area is a growth area. She said she spoke with her neighbor who is a faculty member at Keene State College in the Biology department and she shared names of three people in the Environmental Studies department at that they could

share valuable ideas. Ms. Chalice added that these faculty members may be present at the MFCC advocacy and policy training event and there may be opportunity to network.

Plastic packaging problem-Chair Wilton stated that there is a huge plastic packaging problem affecting our oceans and she hopes that agriculture can be part of the solution. Ms. Straughen said that she has spoken extensively to her colleagues at the Co-op about the national trend of consumer preferences for pre-packaged foods in plastic. She said it is very difficult to devise solutions because although the Co-op's plastics are all 100% recyclable, post-consumer plastic, they cannot be composted without a commercial composting system and the state of NH does not have one. She said that a commercial composting process chips materials very small and then regulates the temperature very well and that process is impossible to achieve in a home composting system. Mr. Daloz said the commercial composting can present job and investment opportunities. Councilor Chadbourne said she would talk to other Councilors about the composting situation and have some feedback for next week. Ms. Straughen said Keene currently accepts compost but there is no curbside composting available.

Mr. Daloz asked if Ms. Straughen if perhaps get a produce manager from Keene at the Co-op to replace her position on the committee. Ms. Straughen said she would look into it.

Mr. Daloz stated that Keene is Partner Cities with a German City called Einbech. He said that German students are coming to Keene to visit in September or October. Mr. Daloz stated Einbech hosts the fifth largest seed company in the world and grow sugar beets. He asked how they could possibly strengthen interactions with their community. He asked to put it on the agenda for next month as it could be interesting to see what they are doing. Ms. Straughen said sugar beets are primarily grown in the southwest to be processed into sugar. Mr. Daloz stated what if they could begin growing non-GMO sugar beets in Keene.

Community kitchen garden-Chair Wilton said no one has been assigned to this task yet.

Create a frequently asked question input flyer-Chair Wilton said maybe they can get community feedback for creating the flyer.

8) Next Meeting – Wednesday, September 13, at 3:30PM

9) Adjournment

Chair Wilton adjourned the meeting at 4:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute Taker