

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**AGRICULTURAL COMMISION MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, April 9, 2015    3:30 PM                    2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room**

**Members Present:**

Marcia Duffy  
Mark Florenz, Alternate  
Allison Welsh  
Alan Bettler  
Sarah Wilton  
Marcia Duffy

**Staff Present:**

Michele Chalice, Planner

**Members Not Present:**

Councilor Carl Jacobs, Chair  
Kathy Harrington  
Dr. Eleanor Vander Haegen, Vice Chair

**Others Present:**

Sarah Powell, Antioch  
Elizabeth McCann, Antioch

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call-**

Ms. Wilton called the meeting to order at 3:40 PM. Roll call was conducted.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting- January 15, 2015**

Ms. Welsh made a motion to approve the minutes of January 15, 2015. Mr. Florenz seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

**3. Review Cities for Climate Protection Committee Request**

Tabled until the next meeting

**4. Review AUNE's Completed Keene Community Gardens Assessment, potential speaker; Libby McCann**

Ms. McCann asked what the committee would like to see from the Community Gardens. Mr. Florenz stated that community gardens have been discussed by the Committee in the past in reference to current garden locations and the possibility of creating educational pamphlets. Ms. Wilton stated that she enjoyed the report but there was no mention of the farmers and they should be included in the document specifically the section concerning outreach on pg. 11.

Ms. McCann stated that this will not be a published document and if the Committee can use the document in any way they see fit. She continued, stating that Antioch University was able to receive funding and made a strong case due to information from the ICKLY Report and the City Master Plan. Ms. McCann stated that if the reports can be framed to value the Committee in any way it would be great.

Mr. Florenz stated that he would like the Agriculture Commission to go forward and do something beneficial to the community. He continued, stating that the Community Gardens would be in this realm. Ms. Powell stated that people do not know that the gardens exist. Ms. Welsh stated that it would be best to identify where the community gardens are located and who utilizes them. She continued, stating that she feels the Committee does not have a strong mission and promoting the gardens would be a step towards having an active Committee. Mr. Florenz stated that gardens are in the community but marketing needs to be better.

Ms. Chalice stated that an event promoting the gardens would help get participation, possibly a map of the gardens around Keene. Ms. Welsh stated that there was a garden tour. Ms. Duffy stated that the Garden Walk is in June. Ms. McCann stated that there is group that does a garden tour but could not recall the name. Ms. McCann stated that partnering with the Agriculture Committee would be beneficial and stated that long term and short term goals will need to be addressed. She continued, stating that the Recreation Center is in charge of gardens around Keene. Ms. McCann stated that a pamphlet or flyer could also be added to a welcome basket. Ms. Wilton asked about a seed exchange. Mr. Florenz stated that the Committee has never asked for resources from the city. Ms. Powell stated that the community gardens are mostly known by word of mouth.

Ms. McCann stated that there are two or three garden sites for Keene Housing Authority. She continued, stating that there are a few slabs waiting to go in. Ms. McCann stated that there are w 30-35 community members coming to an educational workshop on gardens. Ms. Duffy asked how the Committee can assist. Ms. McCann stated that volunteers are need every Tuesday from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Ms. Welsh stated that she could help recruit volunteers. Ms. McCann stated that hiring staff members would be great also. Mr. Florenz suggested asking Andy Bohannon of the Parks Department about available resources. Ms. Powell referred to the document and stated that it contains marketing ideas along with sample contracts for community garden's participants and rules. She continues, stating that this will include individuals more and let them feel like they are a part of something. Mr. Florenz asked if there are grants to apply for. Ms. Powell stated that there is money out there but research would need to be done. Ms. Chalice stated that there are several grants to apply for but it is very time consuming.

Ms. McCann sated that between all of the partnering organizations, a long term plan can be created. Ms. Powell stated that the goal is to get people out there and return. Mr. Bettler asked

why raised beds were not used. Ms. Welsh stated that accessible beds would allow handicapped or elderly individuals to use them. Ms. Powell stated that people have a sense of pride when they have their own section of a garden. She continued, stating that there was no way to compost as well. Ms. Powell stated that it starts with one person being passionate about the garden and then connect with others.

Ms. McCann stated that one obstacle is the distance to the gardens. She continued, stating that other sites have been viewed. Ms. McCann stated that Antioch University has discussed donating money towards this project and possibly having an intern. She continued, stating that if the Committee was interested in an intern funding may be possible, however this would not be a long term position. Ms. McCann stated that the intern would be under a City Department.

Ms. Welsh asked if any of the past projects were still going strong. Ms. Powell stated that the Community Gardens Connection is still going very strong. She continued, stating that the workshops and sites are very informal at the moment. Ms. Chalice asked if there is a service learning component at Antioch University. Ms. McCann stated this act of communicating with the Committee is a progressive start even though it may not seem like it at the moment. Ms. Welsh asked if Second Chance ever contacted Antioch University. Ms. McCann replied no, but it six beds are a big time commitment.

Ms. Powell stated that a Garden Champion is encouraged to be at each site. Ms. Welsh asked if they have tried to get a Garden Champion at the Cemetery. Ms. McCann stated that nothing has happened yet. She continued, stating that it is not a large piece of land but over 2,000 pounds of food was donated to the Community Pantry last year. She continued, stating that the Education Committee is having a meeting next week and it would be great if the Agriculture Committee attends.

Mr. Florenz suggested that the Committee assist in the grant process as well. Ms. Chalice stated that they City does not have a Grant Writer but this process is huge and allows anyone to access funds if communicated properly. Mr. Florenz stated that the Committee may not have the availability and desire to write grants. Ms. McCann stated that Antioch University may access to grant writing support for this project. She continued, stating that the baseline for food security in this region has not been researched at all.

Ms. McCann stated that a GIS map was completed but a Food Security analysis has not been done yet. Mr. Florenz stated that the Committee should assist in some way. Ms. McCann stated a representative attending MSFC groups would be helpful. Ms. Welsh suggested Committee members be added to email groups. Mr. Florenz stated that he will send out an email to the Education Committee and ask that the Agriculture Committee be involved via email.

Ms. McCann stated that other individuals have strongly suggested outreach as well. She continued, stating that letters of support from the Committee would also be viable. Mr. Bettler asked about the Gleen Program. Mr. Florenz stated that there was some grant money and other resources are available. Mr. Bettler suggested utilizing some of Gleen's resources for the Community Garden Initiative.

Ms. Powell stated that MFCC is also becoming a part of the community but some individuals still do not know. Mr. Florenz suggested asking CNS for support. He continued, stating that it may not be a large request. Mr. Bettler stated that CNS may have better land. Ms. McCann stated that it would be a possible request but the need for resources would need to be showcased through a Food Security Analysis. She continued, stating that the Gleen Program goes to farms and takes the leftover food.

Ms. McCann stated that with all of the sites volunteers are needed. She continued, stating that last year over 6,000 pounds were distributed to the Community Kitchen. Ms. Duffy stated that a tour will be beneficial and generate publicity. She continued, stating that the large part would be the planning but the Committee could assist. Ms. Duffy stated that this would get the message out.

Mr. Florenz stated that money does not need be raised but visibility and suggested having a separate event specifically for the Community Garden Initiative. Ms. Duffy stated that there have been requests for vegetable gardens. Ms. Chalice stated that she will put this item on next month's agenda. Ms. Powell stated that the food is grown for access at community gardens but a larger part is the educational component. She continued, stating that communicating the mission is more important. Ms. Duffy stated that promoting one community garden this year would be a start.

Ms. Chalice stated that the City would be able to print any pamphlets or flyers in color. Mr. Bettler stated that Stonewall Farm is a member of the Garden Tour and a promotional activity could occur at the farm if necessary. Ms. Duffy stated that the Agriculture Committee could sponsor the booth for the Community Garden Initiative.

#### **5. Farmer's Market – Ideas to suggest?**

Tabled until the next meeting.

#### **6. New or Other Business**

#### **6. Next Meeting – May 14, 2015 at 3:30PM**

#### **7. Adjournment**

Chair Jacobs adjourned the meeting at 4:30PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Lana C. Bluege, Minute-taker  
April 9, 2015

