



City of Keene
New Hampshire

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION AGENDA

Wednesday, May 8, 2019

3:30 PM

4TH Floor Conference Room

Commission Members

Catherine (Kit) Souther, Chair
Councilor Bettina A. Chadbourne, Vice Chair
Mark Florenz
Aaron Moody
Charles Daloz

Staff

Rhett Lamb, Community Dev. Director/ACM

1. Call to order
2. Approve April 10, 2019 minutes
3. Guest Speaker – Rhett Lamb, Assistant City Manager
4. Membership Agriculture Awareness – Current Events
5. Agriculture Commission Brochure
6. Agricultural Plan from Southwest Region Planning Commission
7. Threats and opportunities in local agriculture
8. New business
9. Next Meeting – Wednesday, June 12, 2019 at 3:30PM
10. Adjournment

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New Hampshire

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Wednesday, April 10, 2019

3:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room

Commission Members

Catherine (Kit) Souther, Chair
Councilor Bettina A. Chadbourne, Vice Chair
Mark Florenz
Aaron Moody
Charles Daloz

Staff

Rhett Lamb, Planning Director

1) Call to order-

2)

Chair Souther called meeting to order at 3:34 pm.

3) Approve March 13, 2019 minutes

Councilor Chadbourne moved to accept the March 13 minutes with revisions, Mr. Florenz seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Revisions are as follows:

First paragraph, first sentence: add “met” to “Vice Chair Souther stated that AGC has not lately.”

Second paragraph change: “MIP” to “CMP.”

4) Opening, Introductions, Attendance, etc.

Chair Souther stated that all members are present today.

5) Membership Agriculture Awareness – who, what, where for: each member tells their month's agricultural information to all

Mr. Daloz stated that members should discuss various projects they are learning about themselves, for example, he has visited Antioch University New England (AUNE), Keene State College (KSC) and they can provide a quick blurb at each meeting about the things they have learned about and perhaps create working groups.

6) Chicken and Agriculture Commission brochures*

Chair Souther stated that the Good Chicken Neighbor brochure is already published and in circulation. She said the Agricultural Commission brochure is designed to match the style of the

Chicken brochure for printing economy and simplicity. She said the hope is to have it completed quickly. They also will need to decide on the content for the final panel. Members agreed that a Resources section would be ideal and Chair Souther said she would populate that section with resources from the website. She said the alternative idea was to add a “Seasonal Eating” section but that might be better placed on the website as it is a long list. Mr. Daloz said they will only print about 30-50 brochures so they should try a “Resources” panel for a while and if they want to they can change it in the future. Chair Souther suggested adding local organizations that are involved in agriculture and they can place the “Seasonal Eating” on the website and link to it on the brochure. Mr. Daloz suggested that they mention maple syrup season, arugula season and seasonal foods of that nature. Councilor Chadbourne asked what other members think about the “Seasonal Eating” idea.

Mr. Daloz asked that in reference to agenda item number four, his idea was to discuss various projects they are engaged in. He said he envisioned members giving a quick blurb about that they have learned about agriculture in the community. Chair Souther stated that if members have updates, they can put them in agenda item number four or New Business.

Mr. Florenz said he likes the idea of linking to more dynamic organizations, for example, the Farm Bureau and the Monadnock Farm Community Coalition (MFCC) due to their existing resources and to avoid “reinventing the wheel.” Mr. Daloz asked if members can send their ideas to Chair Souther. Chair Souther replied that she will incorporate member suggestions and changes into the Resources panel within the next two weeks.

Councilor Chadbourne suggested having a New Business item on the agenda for the future.

6. Commission status and membership update

Mr. Florenz asked for an update on commission membership. Mr. Daloz stated that City Council agreed to a new member, Ms. Kira Wadsworth. Councilor Chadbourne stated that a new member being considered is someone that the Mayor requested. Mr. Florenz said he saw Mr. Alan Raymond at the Monadnock Co-op. Mr. Daloz replied that Mr. Raymond submitted an application and he has to follow through with several steps including submitting a resume and then AGC will vote on it. He said the other potential member is Ms. Christina Major from Dusty Dog who has already written a letter that did not go anywhere before but now is at the attention of the Mayor. Mr. Florenz asked if there is any way AGC could have more input on this process as it seems like they are in a better position to advise on their own membership.

Mr. Daloz stated that there is one member already established and then there are two other people, including Mr. Raymond from the Co-op and Ms. Major. Mr. Daloz said he left word at Dusty Dog. Councilor Chadbourne stated the new member’s name is Ms. Kira Wadsworth and she lives on Colorado Street. She said the Community Development Department said she Ms. Wadsworth had sent in a letter. Mr. Florenz said that Mr. Raymond, the Produce Manager at the Co-op, sent a letter in as well. Mr. Daloz asked if the Chair can reach out to the new members and Councilor Chadbourne replied that in the past the staff liaison would do that. Mr. Florenz said the Co-op Produce Manager’s name is Mr. Alan Raymond. Councilor Chadbourne stated that she would send an email to the Mayor about the two members and advise him that AGC supports them as valuable to the committee. Chair Souther stated that would bring membership up to 7 members and that would leave one alternate position open if Ms. Major is approved. Mr. Daloz asked how many members they need for a full committee and Chair Souther replied 7

regular members and 1 alternate. Mr. Florenz said that means they need 4 people present to have a quorum so they need at least 5 members and Chair Souther agreed.

7) Seeking group permission to request Agricultural Plan from SWRPC

Mr. Daloz stated that AGC was supposed to develop an Agricultural Plan as part of the Master Plan (MP) in 2012. Mr. Florenz said they have already had discussions about agriculture not being specifically called out in the Master Plan, it was only referenced in a few areas of the MP; however, they cannot update the MP outside of the normal cycle. Mr. Daloz said he was advised to go to Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC) and they could come up with a generalized concept of where the City of Keene is going with agriculture. Mr. Florenz said AGC has already provided guidance about the areas in which they thought agriculture is important. Councilor Chadbourne said she can check in with the Mr. Lamb, the Director of Community Development, about where AGC is in that process and report back to the commission next month.

Chair Souther asked if there are any suggestions about projects to move forward with. Mr. Moody suggested identifying various threats or opportunities that might be coming up, for example, zoning changes or potential City-owned land that is available that is not currently being used. Councilor Chadbourne said this is where having a staff liaison was helpful to AGC. Mr. Florenz suggested getting involved in the City's zoning changes activities. He suggested having Mr. Lamb come in to speak with AGC to learn what is on the horizon. Councilor Chadbourne said she would speak with Mr. Lamb about coming in to speak with AGC for next month's meeting. Councilor Chadbourne said there is no staff person available for AGC. Mr. Florenz stated that he sees the role for AGC as a means of understanding what is going on in the City in terms of regulations and having influence over that process and that is more important to him than community relations.

Mr. Daloz said he is interested in what the City is doing at Department of Public Works (DPW), Community Garden Connections (CGC), Keene Recreation Center and other similar departments and initiatives. Councilor Chadbourne suggested having a series of guest speakers from those departments and organizations come in to discuss their activities, for example, pollinator habitat initiatives. Mr. Florenz stated that he learned that the Conservation District received a new grant in partnership with AUNE's CGC to help create resources for urban farming, which is considered both backyard hobby farming and commercial farming. He said Ms. Amanda Littleton is the point person for that and Councilor Chadbourne suggested she could be the next speaker.

Chair Souther said last time they talked about being aware of what other organizations, boards and commissions are doing. She said Councilor Chadbourne will take on the task of speaking to Mr. Lamb. Mr. Daloz stated it would be good if they could find a way to landscape the Gilbo Avenue lot to make it more attractive. Mr. Florenz stated that there is a group of people going into the old Ellis Farm. He said when the Ellis Farm was sold it was converted into low density housing and the question now is if the people interested in the property can own livestock. Mr. Daloz said the people that are interested are two employees from KSC and AUNE and the idea is to have an urban farm using students for labor. Mr. Florenz said it represents a good zoning question. Mr. Daloz stated that he would advocate for the Ellis Farm. Mr. Florenz said the Ellis Farm traditionally was on the south side of Hurricane, however, there is land on both sides of the road that the Hansel family is interested in putting into agricultural use. He said he believes they are not in a rush to the land into conservation easement. Mr. Daloz said the back area can be used

as pasture for cows or sheep. Councilor Chadbourne suggested Mr. George Hansel could be another guest speaker. She said Mr. Hansel sits on the Board of MEDIC and they are working on revitalizing the Gilbo Avenue corridor and creating permanent space for the Farmer's Market. Councilor Chadbourne said the land was donated to KSC and they are eager to cooperate with the town.

Mr. Florenz asked for an update on the Ashuelot River Park initiative. Councilor Chadbourne said their plan was to turn it into a park but nothing has happened. Mr. Florenz said they said they agreed that the Farmer's Market would not be moved there. Councilor Chadbourne said they could find out from Mr. Bohannon or from the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Committee. Mr. Moody asked if the City is taking the Kingsbury property and they said that was up in the air. Chair Souther said she would follow up with Mr. Bohannon on what is going on with the Ashuelot River Park and the Community Gardens. Mr. Florenz said it would be nice to get Mr. Lamb in first, then Ms. Littleton, Mr. Bohannon and Mr. Hansel. Councilor Chadbourne said she would ask Mr. Lamb what he would like to do. Mr. Florenz said the City would be well served to have a permanent Farmer's Market. Chair Souther replied the Farmer's Market was doing very well with their Winter Market in the Colony Mill building. Mr. Florenz stated that he would also like to plug in to MEDIC's activities.

Mr. Daloz reviewed their guest speakers and activities for the month ahead. He said first they will contact Mr. Lamb. Councilor Chadbourne said the Resources panel will also be added to the flyer and they will vote on the final product next month. Chair Souther stated that she will create content for "Seasonal Eating" for the website. Councilor Chadbourne said she will also report back about next month about new membership. Chair Souther stated that she would speak to Mr. Bohannon and also look into the minutes for the land use changes. Councilor Chadbourne said they can also address land use and the Master Plan with Mr. Lamb.

Mr. Florenz said he would like to invite Ms. Littleton in as a visitor in the next couple of months and he will coordinate with her. Mr. Daloz asked for updates from Mr. Florenz about Ms. Littleton's attendance. Chair Souther said Mr. Bohannon can be invited for June and Councilor Chadbourne said she would like to have Ms. Littleton attend in June instead. Mr. Daloz stated that he will also start looking at the Ellis Farm. Councilor Chadbourne said Mr. Lamb will probably be able to answer questions about MEDIC. Councilor Chadbourne said that MEDIC is planning to hire an Economic Development Coordinator that the City Manager announced at the last full City Council meeting.

Mr. Florenz suggested that MFCC is better positioned to publicize farm activities and events on an events calendar as they have more of a following than AGC. He said anyone can become a member.

8) Adjournment

Chair Souther adjourned the meeting at 4:23 pm.

9) Next Meeting – Wednesday, May 8, 2019 at 3:30PM

Respectfully submitted by,
Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute-Taker
Reviewed by Kit Souther
Edits by Lee Langella