



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

**AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION AGENDA**

Wednesday, December 11, 2019

3:30 PM

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Committee Room

**Commission Members**

Mark Florenz, Vice Chair  
Councilor Bettina A. Chadbourne  
Aaron Moody  
Charles Daloz  
Kira Wadsworth  
Allen Raymond

**Staff**

Rhett Lamb, Com. Dev. Dir./  
Assistant City Manager

1. Call to order
2. Approve August 14, 2019 and October 9, 2019 minutes
3. Annual review of projects and goals
4. New business
5. Next Meeting – Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 3:30PM
6. Adjournment

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City of Keene  
New Hampshire

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION AGENDA  
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 14, 2019

3:30 PM

2nd Floor Committee Room

**Members Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

**Members Not Present:**

Mark Florenz  
Kira Wadsworth

**1) Call To Order**

Catherine Souther called the meeting to order at 3:36pm.

**2) Approve June 12, 2019 Minutes**

Allen Raymond confirmed with the group that Mark Florenz was listed as not present but was present and Rhett Lamb was listed as present but was not present at the meeting. Ms. Souther moved to amend the minutes from last week. Bettina Chadbourne seconded the motion and was passed unanimously.

**3) Threats and Opportunities in Local Ag**

Ms. Souther suggested pasture management as an opportunity to support local agriculture. It's the most profitable and less maintenance options in some senses. Aaron Moody said you would need fencing which could be donated and we would need someone to move the animals and monitor them. Mr. Moody continues stating Stonewall Farm is doing work with the Savery Institute, a worldwide institute to practice holistic grazing. It mimics regenerative agriculture, also known as mob grazing, which mimics old methods of farming and grazing which gives grass time to grow and roots to grow deeper and sequesters carbon into the ground and acts as self-fertilizing. Within the city limits there are folks who might be interested in a space for grazing due to the demand and interest for raising beef. Mr. Moody stated one of the challenges to regenerative agriculture is a significant amount of land is needed. Mr. Moody asked if we could look into space for grazing, either city or private, maybe West Keene, or perhaps the C&S fields which are being hayed and not fertilized at all. Ms. Chadbourne asked why it would be a problem to hay and not fertilize at all. Ms. Souther stated if land is being used and not fertilized the wrong things will grow in the field and reduced the productivity of the field. Mr. Moody stated tractors produce a lot of carbon whereas with cows they produce some methane but they put it back in the ground. Mr. Moody stated if the cows do not eat corn, they produce even less methane. Ms. Chadbourne asked for clarification on cows eating corn. Mr. Raymond stated cows do not digest corn well.

Charles Daloz stated that Bent Court is administered by Public Works not by Parks and Rec. Parks and Rec was asked by Public Works to handle the mowing, and in order to get permission to do something we need to go to public works. Mr. Daloz stated the head of public works and the facility management is generally known to be very forward thinking in their methods. Ms. Chadbourne stated we could have the head of Public Works come to the next meeting as a guest speaker. Mr. Daloz asked the group if we could have Mr. Moody speak with the head of public works directly and report back to the group. Mr. Moody responded saying he would speak with the head of public works.

Mr. Daloz said last meeting the group discussed a pollinator garden out of Bent Court, which is expensive and we would need to mow the entire plot and start new. Ms. Souther stated the pollinator garden is maybe over ambitious for us. Ms. Chadbourne stated Amanda Littleton said there was grant money and manpower too. Ms. Souther stated that was the reason she brought it up initially and we have quite a few around town and the library. Mr. Daloz stated it was recommended we could mow a third and a third and a third, but the alternative is the use animals. Ms. Souther stated she supports pollinator friendly yard signs, which could be the best way for us to support it. Ms. Souther stated she wasn't sure what criteria is used to determine a pollinator garden but she will check with surrounding towns. Bee Friendly is also a good idea for a sign. Mr. Moody stated some people are allergic to bees however. Ms. Chadbourne stated in her own personal garden she wanted to attract dragonflies as well as butterflies and hummingbirds and she has all of them. Mr. Moody said attracting opossums is also good because they eat a lot of ticks. Mr. Raymond brought up bioengineering as the new term for GMO with new packaging and labeling and companies will not be required to label the package as being bioengineered. The USDA is trying to pull away the negativity essentially.

Mr. Moody stated commercial dairy as a threat to local agriculture and smaller farmers can't compete with a large-scale farm's prices. Mr. Moody asked if we have Facebook and Instagram and if the group would have to go through the city government to post things and public information and such. Ms. Chadbourne stated we would need to contact the city or Public Works. Mr. Moody said he would contact the city. Mr. Daloz said we could post about things like the pollinator garden and how to qualify. Ms. Chadbourne stated that in the last meeting Mr. Daloz spoke about having the manure run off into the water. Mr. Daloz said there are ways to write it up. Mr. Moody said there is a way to do it right and with knowledge of working with the USDA expressed he has the experience to handle it. Mr. Moody said you have to be so many feet away from a water source. Mr. Daloz suggested we try to do it. Mr. Moody said the challenge in a non-profit collaboration with the city, like Stonewall Farm, you need more land and they have to rotate and move cattle more often. Ms. Chadbourne asked if there was a way to move the cattle without having them cross the road. Mr. Moody suggested it could be turned into an event like Strolling of the Heifers or a green beltway. Mr. Daloz said the wire walk is underutilized and there is so much potential there for open or public grazing. Ms. Chadbourne said goats would do well. Ms. Souther suggested cows and sheep as well.

Ms. Souther stated there is a lot of farm to restaurant stuff going on. Mr. Daloz asked how the Agricultural Commission could become part of this initiative. Ms. Souther more cross organization action. Mr. Moody a liaison could help and we could help facilitate the connections. Mr. Daloz stated if the group actively worked to complete a project at Bent Court with either grazing or the pollinator project we could connect many people. Mr. Moody and Amanda Littleton with the Cheshire County Conservation District has a lot of grants available.

Mr. Daloz the community garden and the Antioch gardens are all around too. Ms. Souther the food friendly yards is also something we can promote. Mr. Daloz do we have little signs people could use to put in their yards. Ms. Souther said she would check on it. Mr. Moody said we could do educational forums and communicate ideas like not mowing lawns too short because dandelions are good. Ms. Souther said we could promote low impact yards or no-mow lawn and how much it's bad for the environment. Mr. Daloz said the committee could give out recognition for the best garden. Ms. Souther said the committee could give people awards. Mr. Moody stated it wouldn't have to be about just flowers. Ms. Souther asked if the committee could give out awards. Ms. Chadbourne documented Ms. Souther's question. Ms. Souther stated this is where a Facebook or Instagram page would be beneficial. Mr. Raymond said the committee could use that platform to share the seed program that the library is doing. The Monadnock Coop is in partnership with the library in a buyback program. Ms. Chadbourne asked when the seeds expire can you still use them. Mr. Raymond stated the germination rate decreases by they are still usable. Mr. Daloz the Keene Housing Program also uses that program. Ms. Chadbourne asked if people could use seeds from food and plant those. Mr. Raymond said he believes that is what the library's seed program is trying to do. Ms. Souther said most seed library's plant and then use the seeds from those plants to replace the ones taken, which hopefully the library has a seed saving clinic because some plants have a specific requirements of how to properly save the seeds so the plants do not grow up sick. Ms. Souther continued suggesting encouraging a lawn and pruning edible landscape to have a food friendly yard and said she would look into what other commissions are working on something like this. Many people are not aware or informed when it comes to agriculture and that is the biggest challenge right, most people are not thinking about agriculture in their day-to-day life. Ms. Souther continued saying that encouraging hobby farms is a good idea too because those folks are usually supportive of local farms. Ms. Chadbourne said she has someone to talk to about social media. Ms. Souther asked if the committee should put the brochure out again and get it approved. Ms. Souther also stated she took notes on which committee members agreed to take on which projects. Mr. Daloz shared we were due to agree on adopting the standards, rules and procedures from the city. Ms. Souther agreed the committee should adopt the rules. Ms. Chadbourne stated she would find out when the report to council about what the committee has accomplished and what the committee's goals and plans are. Ms. Chadbourne continued saying the City of Keene has a comprehensive master plan and part of their vision is agriculture and as a commission we believed the section was weak. As a committee, we wanted to be able to meet with them and go in further depth about the changes the committee envisions for the agricultural master plan.

**4) New Business**

See above

**5) Adjournment**

Ms. Souther adjourned the meeting at 4:46pm.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Claire Kunzler, Minute Taker

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

**AGRICULTURE COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, October 9, 2019**

**5:00 PM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Committee Rm**

**Members Present:**

Charles Daloz  
Allen Raymond  
Kira Wadsworth  
Mark Florenz, Vice Chair

**Staff Present:**

**Members Not Present:**  
Catherine (Kit) Souther, Chair  
Councilor Bettina A. Chadbourne  
Aaron Moody

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Florenz called the meeting to order at 3:40 PM.

**2. Approve August 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Raymond made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of August 14, 2019. Ms. Wadsworth seconded the motion.

Mr. Raymond noted a correction: the last large paragraph says that the Monadnock Food Coop is “in partnership” with the library’s seed exchange, but they are not. He continued that the Coop donated seeds.

Mr. Daloz inquired about the overall style and formatting of meeting minutes. Mr. Raymond suggested he talk with the commission’s staff liaison about that. The minute-taker encouraged Mr. Daloz to reach out to the City Clerk’s Office with any questions or feedback.

The motion passed unanimously.

**3. Annual Review of Projects and Goals**

Mr. Florenz stated that the commission did not meet in September and he was not at the August meeting, so he does not know where the group left off with this.

Mr. Raymond replied that the group had been talking about threats and opportunities at the last meeting. He continued that Chair Souther gave specific assignments to members. There were things people were going to research more.

Mr. Florenz asked if they should table this topic. Mr. Raymond stated that Councilor Chadbourne was supposed to follow up with people. He continued that Aaron Moody also had assignments but he cannot remember what they were. He himself raised the question about threats, and talked about ways in which companies are labeling food packages in ways that could make it harder to identify GMOs.

Mr. Daloz stated that he does not know all of the projects the commission is involved in, but he would be interested in the list. He asked, don’t they need the list soon? Isn’t Chair Souther soon

presenting an update on the commission's activities to the City Council? Discussion ensued about the City Council presentation and what the commission has and has not done.

Mr. Florenz stated that his question is more about going forward and making sure commission members are all on board with what the priorities are and our goals are for the coming year. He continued that for example, they have been talking on and off about pollinator habitat, and utilizing City-owned properties.

Mr. Daloz asked what happened to the commission's brochure. Mr. Florenz replied that it is 95% done. He continued that it is more a procedural question of how to finish it and where does it go. Brief discussion ensued.

Ms. Wadsworth stated that there was also talk about starting a Facebook page. Mr. Raymond replied that that might be what Councilor Chadbourne was looking into – whether the commission could have its own page, or if it has to be part of the Community Development Department, and who the commission should contact if they want the City to promote certain things. Discussion ensued. Mr. Florenz stated that the general question is: how can they better publicize events happening in the city that are relevant, using the City's existing communication tools? Mr. Raymond stated that he thinks Mr. Moody was going to follow up about Bent Court usage and what that is about.

Mr. Florenz stated that it sounds like there are three main projects or goals that they want to explore pollinator habitat, social media, and open spaces/Bent Court/City-owned spaces. Mr. Raymond stated that the brochure is tied in with the social media goal.

Mr. Florenz stated that they really need Councilor Chadbourne and Chair Souther here for details about this, so they should table it until next month. Brief discussion ensued about Bent Court. Mr. Raymond agreed with Mr. Florenz's listing of the three big goals, and stated that when they have the full group here, they can look at how to break those into action plans so they are achievable, and who will take the lead on what. Mr. Daloz agreed and encouraged the group to bring their thoughts to the next meeting. Mr. Florenz stated that each project/goal could be an agenda item at each meeting so they could discuss the status of each, if everyone agrees what the goals are, keeping in mind that the goals are open to revision. Mr. Raymond and Ms. Wadsworth agreed.

Mr. Florenz asked where they are at regarding pollinator habitat, and who was heading that up. Mr. Daloz replied that to create a pollinator garden at Bent Court would seem to require tilling the entire area. Mr. Florenz replied that there are other ways of encouraging pollinators that are less time-consuming, like mowing schedules. Discussion ensued about methods for encouraging pollinators, including Mr. Moody's suggestion of using cows for mowing. Mr. Raymond stated that SMART goals are helpful – goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. He continued that cows would not be realistic at the moment. They could look at something the commission could accomplish, such as: how to get the community to support pollinator habitat, and how to get a basic brochure out. Discussion continued. Mr. Daloz spoke about the pollinator garden run by the Friends of Open Spaces, at the community gardens out beyond the bowling alley. He continued that it is theoretically open to anyone. Mr. Florenz stated that he feels like encouraging pollinator habitat fits within their mission. He continued that there are lots of ways to do that, and they can discuss it more at the next meeting. Sometimes things get lost if there is not clarity about who is driving it and what the next steps

are. Ms. Wadsworth replied that she would love to research what already exists and what the options are.

Mr. Florenz asked what Mr. Daloz's other proposals are. Mr. Daloz replied that his project could be getting people to help with the not-well-utilized community gardens project that is administered by Parks & Recreation Director Andrew Bohannon. He continued that there are other gardens in the community to consider, and gave examples of locations. He spoke about encouraging people's use of such gardens/spaces. Mr. Florenz suggested that what Mr. Daloz is talking about fits in with the goal of better utilizing City-owned spaces. Mr. Daloz agreed. Mr. Raymond stated that they need to identify the City-owned properties that are not developed or utilized, and that are accessible, and see what they can do with those green spaces. Mr. Florenz replied that two or three years ago the commission did a mapping project. Mr. Daloz replied yes, of "potential community garden sites." He continued that that should be available somewhere in the group's archives. Discussion continued.

Mr. Daloz stated that the Keene Farmer's Market is another topic. He continued that anything the commission can figure out that makes the farmer's market better is probably going to be good. He continued that this topic simmers on the back burner and he does not know if the commission has ever solved anything. Mr. Florenz stated that long term, it would be great for the farmer's market to be in a better, stable, long-term location. He continued that it is to the commission's benefit to stay in touch with the farmer's market and help them communicate with the City. This does not need to be a huge project for the commission. The farmer's market goes before the City Council every year and talks about parking meters. Maybe the commission could somehow make that conversation easier. They could reach out again and see if there are coordinators from the farmer's market who want to talk with the commission. Discussion continued about the farmer's market, its vendors, its location, its relation and relevancy to the commission, how involved the commission should be and in what way, the Gilbo Avenue project, and so on and so forth.

Mr. Florenz stated that it would be helpful to have someone be a point person for these things. He continued that at their next meeting, it would be good to identify a point person. The point person could reach out to farmer's market folks and whoever is driving the Gilbo Avenue project, work to better understand the farmer's market's relationship with the City Council regarding parking meters, etc., and try to come up with some projects for this coming year. Ms. Wadsworth replied that she is very curious about the Gilbo Avenue project, and could reach out to someone about that. Mr. Florenz replied that he has a good relationship with some of the farmer's market people, so he could reach out to them and see where they are at this point.

Mr. Florenz stated that the question is how the commission can support the farmer's market. Mr. Daloz replied yes, their overall message is "Let's maintain a good relationship with you; we're glad you're here."

#### **4. New Business**

None.

#### **5. Next Meeting – Wednesday, November 13, 2019**

Mr. Raymond spoke about how the presentation to the City Council should show the City Council how the commission is moving forward. He stated that yes, they have had struggles, but



they are moving forward – it would be good to focus the presentation 60% on the future and 40% on the past. Brief discussion ensued.

**6. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted by  
Britta Reida, Minute-taker