



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

**AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION AGENDA**

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

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 December 11, 2019 minutes
3. Elections (Chair & Vice Chair)
4. Rhett Lamb, Community Development Director
5. New business
6. Next Meeting – Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 3:30PM
7. Adjournment

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

**AGRICULTURAL Commission**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, December 11, 2019**

**3:30 PM**

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

**Members Present:**

Mark Florenz, Vice Chair  
Aaron Moody  
Charles Daloz  
Allen Raymond

**Staff Present:**

Rhett Lamb, Community Development  
Director/Assistant City Manager

**Members Not Present:**

Councilor Bettina Chadbourne  
Kira Wadsworth  
Catherine Souther

**1) Call to Order**

Vice Chair Florenz called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

**2) Approve August 14, 2019 & October 9, 2019 Minutes**

Mr. Moody moved to approve the minutes of August 14, 2019, which Mr. Daloz seconded and the Commission carried unanimously.

Mr. Daloz moved to approve the minutes of October 9, 2019, which Mr. Moody seconded and the Commission carried unanimously.

**3) Annual Review of Projects & Goals**

Vice Chair Florenz recalled beginning this discussion at the October meeting and he thought good progress was made. The Commission continued their annual review.

High-level topics from last meeting included: support for the farmers market as much as possible; determine if there are more effective uses for City lands (e.g., grazing or community gardens). We discussed raising awareness of the Agriculture Commission and its resources (social media and brochure; who the Commission is, what we do, and opportunities in the area such as the Co-Op). Also advocate for agriculture in the City process. Advocacy can be reactive to things such as zoning, planning, or an issue on a specific farm.

In August, the Commission discussed if they could have a social media page. Questions remain as to if that is possible through the City. No other Commissions have a dedicated Facebook page; instead, they use the Community Development Department's social media and webpage to advertise events, which the Commission could also use for awareness. Staff will help inquire about this approach. Members also recalled that there is an Commission webpage with resources, essentially including what was in the brochure, available through the City of Keene website (<https://ci.keene.nh.us/agricultural-commission>).

Members discussed the role of agriculture in Keene in terms of the Commission's purpose. All members believe agriculture is important, but question how the Commission could justify/counsel the community on the Commission's purpose. Perhaps by beginning with the benefits of agriculture and farms in the City (economic, environmental, etc.). Members themselves are interested in finding those answers while developing a brochure or webpage. A past Commission presentation to City Council on the benefits of agriculture should still be available on the website. The Commission agreed it would be worthwhile to have one member conduct an inventory of commercial agricultural pursuits, what is available on the website, what the Commission has already developed, and to ensure materials are consolidated. Members agreed to assign having a member take on this task of reviewing what resources the Commission already has and then to discuss as a group how to move forward. This effort can include surveying City officials from the Departments of Parks, Recreation & Cemeteries and Public Works, in addition to community members, to generate an understanding of needs.

Members continued reviewing tasks for each high-level focus.

#### Farmers Market Tasks:

- Invite the coordinator(s) to a Commission meeting to determine if we can support them. Members agreed this is the best way to start determining if/what the Commission can do to advocate for the market and ensure they feel valued. Communication between the Farmer's Market and the City has historically not been the easiest and the Commission could potentially be a conduit for the Market's concerns to be heard in the hopes that something more can come from it (such as not requiring liability insurance and providing free parking). This effort should occur sooner than later because the process of planning the summer market will begin in January/February, in cooperation with the City.

#### City Land Tasks:

- Invite the Public Works (manages the properties) and Parks, Recreation & Cemeteries Directors to an Commission meeting to understand their current goals and plans for various lands.

#### Awareness Tasks:

- Ensure brochures are complete – one on chickens and NH agriculture are available in addition to a general Keene Agriculture Commission brochure.
- Task a Commission member with getting relevant and up-to-date information available.

#### Advocacy Tasks:

- Invite the Community Development Director to a Commission meeting to review the impact of zoning and planning on agriculture and ensure the Commission can provide input where possible and needed. The City is in the process of reviewing downtown zoning (to streamline City planning processes). This discussion could be a step further to understand what is next outside of downtown, or what new zoning allows for rooftop gardens downtown, for example.

Discussion ensued about City properties already used for agriculture. Members also discussed the tendency of the Commission to be reactive. They discussed opportunities, such as inviting Stonewall Farm to a meeting.

Next, members prioritized the tasks listed above for 2020 in the following *tentative* months:

1. January:
  - a. Invite the Community Development Director to review the Commission's roles and overall zoning/planning efforts in the City that could affect agriculture. He can also guide where to begin discussions on the Farmers Market before committing to anything with the Market coordinator(s). This conversation will also help to understand plans for the downtown that could affect the Farmers Market location. Members thought a pavilion was planned for a more fixed Market location.
2. February:
  - a. Invite Farmers Market coordinator(s) to determine their needs and what the Commission can do to support them (\*this should be on the agenda every January). Members want to know if there are hindrances for more local farmers using the market because of associated fees; if so, the Commission can advocate for removing those roadblocks to support smaller farms. They can present first so City staff can hear their needs.
3. Invite the Directors of Public Works and Parks, Recreation & Cemeteries to discuss the potential role for City land in agriculture.
4. Review current Commission materials and resources to ensure continued relevance (Mr. Moody offered to take on this effort).

Vice Chair Florenz will invite the Community Development Director to the January meeting. He will also agendaize priority 4 in January to begin discussing this effort when meeting time allows.

Mr. Raymond offered to investigate who manages the Farmers Market and reach out to invite them to the February meeting.

Mr. Daloz and Mr. Moody have many ideas for agriculture on City lands, so they can begin drafting those ideas to be prepared when staff visits the Commission.

If the Commission wants to advocate for something in summer 2020, it is ideal to begin planning in March.

#### **4) New Business**

Members presented no new business.

#### **5) Next Meeting – Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 3:30 PM**

There will likely be elections for Chair and Vice Chair again in January. It is ideal for all members to attend the January meeting, if possible. There are also vacancies on the Commission and members should be recruiting. Heather from Stonewall Farm would be an ideal recruit.

#### **6) Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, Vice Chair Florenz adjourned the meeting at 4:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katriona Kibler, Minute Taker  
December 18, 2019