

Auburn Agricultural Committee

Minutes 2 23 2021 approved 3 23 2021

Location: By Zoom

Recorder: Dave Griswold

Staff attending: None. Staff support expected to be appointed when vacant position is filled.

Attending: David Bell, Katie Boss, Dave Griswold, Bill Sylvester, Kathy Shaw, Scott Blanchard, Ed Michaud

Excused: Joe Gray

Absent: Michelle Melaragno

Call to Order: 5:36 pm

Public Participation: None

1. **1 26 21 minutes:** approved.
2. **Guest Presentation:** Renee Page of "Maine Farm to Institution" (MEFTI) shared the work that MEFTI does statewide to increase local food procurement by Maine institutions. Maine Farm to School Network focuses on K-12 schools. Chris Piercy is the head of the Auburn School Lunch Program. Institutions include schools, higher ed, Corrections, hospitals, long term care facilities, summer camps etc. State institutions have a goal of 25% local food purchases by 2025. Covid has spurred focus on development of the Ag system. The Food Sovereignty Act has been adopted by Auburn. Municipalities do not typically take the lead connecting farms to institutions. That role is primarily filled by food coops and food policy councils. When trying to make connections, it is important for buyers and sellers to understand the others' constraints.
3. **Comprehensive Plan Discussion**
 - a. Katie Boss shared on screen the latest draft of the committee's comp plan language draft on screen. All present agreed to review the current draft, submit final edit suggestions to Katie, and vote whether to approve the final draft by Friday 2 26. This was arranged in order to present the document to the Comp Plan Committee on 3 2. After some exchange of ideas via e:mail, a final document with minor edits was approved unanimously by a 7-0 remote vote . Katie forwarded the document to City Staff and Mayor Levesque on 3 1.
4. **New Business**

- a. Bill Sylvester reported that the Zoning work group (Gray, Sylvester, Michaud, Bell) had met several times and was making progress. Several items identified to discuss with full committee.
 - b. Discussion of shuttered LAWPC composting facility as a potential site to locate Ag infrastructure.
 - c. David Bell has been successful dealing with USDA to market product.
 - d. Meat processing is a bottleneck for producers in Maine. Most are booked in 2021.
 - e. Katie reported that city staff planned to attend the March meeting.
 - f. Farmers Market is planning to start in May.
5. Next Future possible agenda items
- a. Historical review of recent Ag committees (Crossroads, MAG-ARP) and learnings
 - b. Craft a vision for agriculture in Auburn and share with community

Action Items:

1. Finalize Comp Plan recommendations as outlined above
2. Katie will edit producers questionnaire and review with Kathy and Joe before sending to Liz Allen.
3. Potential tour of LAWPC composting facility on Penley Corner Road.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 3 23 2021, 5:30pm by Zoom

Pending agenda items:

1. Review recent Ag committees (Crossroads, MAG-ARP) and learnings
2. Zoning work group update
3. Producers questionnaire/survey
4. Craft a vision for agriculture in Auburn and share with community
5. Educational offerings from the Ag Committee
6. Consider posting slide decks of Invasive species and forest pathogen presentations to Maine Woodlands annual meeting on the Ag Committee page. Dave Griswold has obtained the presentations and permission to post them

Adjourned: 7:00 PM

