

Staff and Consultant brief introductions.

Introductions of Committee Members

Mary Sylvester-USM and UMF employment. Restoring old orchards but have not have an opportunity to earn a living on the farm. Auburn Water District Trustee. Committed to watershed protection. Both Cities care about land in conservation to protect the water quality

Kim Finnerty – Manage Whiting Farm – Rent land to approximately 60 farmers that are members of the Somali Bantu Community. Auburn resident but is here representing Whiting Farm.

Rita Morin- Caron Farm- Sopers Mill Road - Family Farm 99 years old-Former Dairy Farm - Rita and father have dream of going from a hay farm to revitalize to make it something good for the community. Health and Human Services career. 3rd year student in nutrition scienc to bridge gap between nutrition science and agriculture - conservation and economic development important. United Farmer Veterans of Maine.

Mia Poliquin Pross- Auburn resident, Hersey Hill Road. 12 year resident grew up in Lewiston. Planning Board Member, Good Food Council Member and works for St. Mary's nutrition Center. Has child and interested in what she will inherit.

David Bell – Co-Owner of Bell Farms, 3rd generation on the farm with a small retail component as about 10%of business, mostly wholesale to Walmart, Market basket, Shaws. Family run on both sides of the river, mostly potatoes, sweet corn and small grains. Making a living farming.

Karen Bolduc – Auburn resident with 10 acres in the AG zone, couple hats-directs small nonprofit called Food Joy meal kit programs locally and sustainable and operates South Auburn Organic mixed vegetable farm. Nonprofits need to make revenue to be sustainable and pay staff and the economic side is important. Good Food Council Chair and finishing MS in Sustainable Food Systems and in the last class. Young family and Auburn is positioned well with AG land and in a prime position to make good use of that land. Important to navigate the process intentionally and not knee-jerk reactions - glad to have Ken and Megan onboard and good to approach this process consciously and thoughtfully.

David Haines- Owns 270 acres on Butler Hill Road between Minot Corner and Hatch Road. 1800 home before Auburn was a City. House is 20 ft from the Minot line but in Auburn. Resident for 50 years in AG zone. Interested in history and City Planning process as AG zone purpose has been to concentrate City Services in downtown areas to prevent sprawl and control costs of services. Used to be a sign at Auburns boundaries that said "The Largest Town in the Country" at 64 square miles there is a lot of land and planners wanted to avoid services to the outskirts. Farm is mostly forested with about 2 acres cleared and he and his wife have extensive organic gardens. Mostly granite and not very level, limited Ag potential, forest management and wildlife and received wildlife habitat improvement grant from Federal Government.

Bill Sylvester- Retired Forester, International Paper career, lifelong Auburn resident owns a couple hundred acres around here and a couple thousand acres up north. Interested in the environment and

forestry, owns skidder and cuts wood, gardens, likes things the way they are and hopes they stay that way. Hopes we can do something with agriculture but trends are not so good. Are you still flying? Yes, pilots license, CDL for tanks and hazardous materials transport, surveyors license, license to inspect sewers and septic tanks, pesticide license, scalers license, all that a forester needs.

Dan Herrick- Farmer, does construction work, contractor, raises hogs, haying, manage about 200 acres between here and NH. Owns 30 acres on Hatch Road. Was totally against this project from day 1 but was convinced to try to work through it. Doesn't know why we are doing this or who started this but our Ag land is deeply in trouble and he knows why we are in this position and feels that he knows what needs to be done to get us through to sustainable Ag land in auburn. Has 7 yr old grandson that is fully vested and interested in farming, loves the barns, farming, haying equipment and there is not a question that you can ask him about farming that will stump him. Would like to see that grow into a sustainable living that isn't there today. A lot of land that was in agriculture that was taken by eminent domain, not far from him. People have asked how they can make a structure livable but were told no and months later industrial uses were allowed so we have lost a lot of Ag land. If a group of us can get together to stop some of this and make it feasible to live on our own properties, invest and make it feasible, health wise I think we can do something with it. 1950/60 Ag study done but most farmers deceased and has worked for many of them. Many farmers don't want to see the land developed but it is costly to clear land and make it tillable again. Hopes after this study we can come out knowing that we did good.

Joe Gray – He and his wife own a farm on Sopers Mill Road. Raise animals, have greenhouses, large garden. Also owns a food store in New Auburn. Here for basically the same reasons that Dan Herrick is.

Eric Cousens – Thankyou – We have 100% attendance of appointed committee members. After hearing backgrounds it is clear why the Mayor appointed you. The Council was clear in funding this study that this is not *just* a study of the Ag and Resource Protection zone, they want us to look at the agricultural sector as a whole, are there hurdles, incentives that could help overcome hurdles. Want to make sure that we are thinking big picture and agriculture occurs in almost any zoning district within the City. The purpose of the committee is to serve in an advisory role to the Planning Board, Council and consultant. We hope the report or information from the committee can reach consensus of the committee to forward recommendations to the Council with actionable items and hoping the committee can serve to engage the public – we intend to do some of that at the staff and consultant level and we will talk about interviews conducted beyond committee member interviews. We hope you are out there talking with people that you deal with in you agricultural work or rural land use throughout the process. Tonight we want to review the obligations of the committee, meeting standards etc and make sure that there is an open discussion where everyone has a chance to speak and be heard and everyone is comfortable engaging. Some issues that you will wrestle with are difficult issues with no clear answers and will require weighing pros and cons. Actual decisions of the committee, recommendations to Council, we are hoping to see a similar format to Council or Planning Board with open discussion and then someone proposing an outcome, with a second person seconding the proposal and a vote of the committee to see if there is majority support for that policy direction. One key in a lot of committees is to have a chairperson to guide the discussion and ensure everyone has a chance to speak, sometimes you don't need that and it works without that but you often don't know that you needed a chair until it's too late

and it would have helped to guide the discussion if there was a chair. We are hoping the committee can elect a chair and vice chair. It may be early in the meeting and we can wait until later in the meeting.

Megan Phillips Goldenberg - Chair and vice chair must be comfortable facilitating and navigating difficult conversations or conflict with consultant help, constructing agendas with consultant as a main task of chairperson.

Eric Cousens – Staff can do as much of that as the group wants but it would be great to have a committee member doing that work so staff is not perceived as guiding the discussion too much – we want this to be a committee discussion.

Committee Consensus – Wait until later in the meeting to elect a chairperson.

Committee has proposal summary and scope of work. Much of this was set by Council, Mayor and original RFP to set a scope that is feasible, determine a budget and decide whether to fund the study.

Ken Meter – Determine how we will work together. Have attempted to contact each committee member to get a sense of what the issues are and were successful in reaching most of you. Helped to learn what is going on here and busy interview schedule this week to package options and issues and to understand who we need to talk to. Main purpose is to compile an accurate sense of what the agricultural economy is like, constraints and why it is hard, what are the obstacles to a sustainable way of farming as Dan mentioned.

Complied data from state and County, economic data, gathering local mapping, data, soils etc and will be asking what else the committee needs for information to make informed decisions. Our job is to provide good data and information from an outside perspective without shadings of our own priorities and help the committee walk through the process of making decisions so that you can come up with the future plans that you want to have. Turn it over to Megan. Steps are listed in scope document but we are open to changes if there is a better way to spend our time giving you the information that you need.

Megan– Won't read the whole document but want to review the timeline on the back. Delayed start from bid to funding. Data on population , household density, a lot of data that will be presented. Interviews over last month and learning new people that we should talk to. Original stakeholder list including organizations like Maine Farmland Trust, St Mary's Nutrition Center, Cultivating Community, Somali Bantu Community, Ag Systems perspective. Recently been reaching out to individual land owners that participated in 2016 survey showing interests in the original funding discussion. 47 people interviewed to date, more to do, but hearing the spectrum of concerns. Eric will print list of interviewees.

Ken - Also wanted to wait to do interviews now rather than mid fall harvest.

Dan Herrick- Are we just interviewing people in Auburn?

Ken –We can certainly cross the river. We are only making recommendations in Auburn but we want to understand the larger environment.

Mary Sylvester – Leads to her question – Curious to what extent how we understand our opportunities compared to other nearby counties. Interested in context.

Megan – Discussed data that is being collected.

Dan – Was contacted by a farmer across the river. Why are we moving to the outskirts as they were not part of the funding?

Megan – Some landowners are not residents or are in both communities and other groups don't own land but might look to move into Auburn or do their shopping here, growing our food economy.

Eric – We often look outside of Auburn for economic development in general to understand what opportunities exist.

Megan – Reviewing Actions to date – any questions about scope of work?

Mary – Did the scope of work include talking to large institutional customers like U Maine System (30% goal for served food to be locally sourced), Bates College

Ken and Megan-Linking buyers, processors and sellers – **Engage better with Potential Institutional Customer**

Karen Bolduc – Can we Characterize consultant role in one sentence – She sees it as Helping the Committee and the City find the best way to strengthen it's agricultural sector and economy and conserve agricultural lands.

Ken – That is a good summary. Trying to present information to make the decision making process easier for the committee.

Megan – To listen, collect data, refine and provide information about what is occurring and bring information. Help the committee refine goals.

David Haines – Auburn has a master Plan – The Comprehensive Plan, that we should be aware of.

Eric - Part of why we are here is because we had proposed individual changes recommended by the Comprehensive Plan and the Council at that time did not want to make individual changes until there could be a more inclusive discussion about agriculture as a whole. A 10-15 year plan adopted in 2011.

Rita Morin – Is that why the Council rushed to make changes to the zoning for recreation? Take your time is like talking out both sides of our mouths.

Joe Gray – That's why what we are doing doesn't matter.

Rita Morin – We were invited to do the study to have a major stake in the discussions and the decisions seemed very quick and the language seemed to be existing for a long time. The committee is to represent the community. Is it an Ag study or a business study? What is our purpose?

Eric – They saw a sense of urgency because of project opportunities that were presented. Your point is well taken, I can't speak to past decisions but to answer the question we are here to examine Auburns agricultural segment or economy and to provide recommendations on what we can do to enhance it going forward.

Rita Morin –Will there be conservation involved in that?

Eric- The current AG/RP zone includes sensitive natural areas as well as preserving open space. There may be areas that should not be used for anything, including agriculture and if they meet certain criteria that could be part of your recommendations.

Rita Morin – Is that part of our purview?

Eric- It certainly can be.

Mary – So we are not trying to separate out what is resource protection from agriculture, are we?

Eric-Maybe we should. We won't designate boundaries with this process but the group could set criteria to determine which lands may not be appropriate for agriculture. One of the Comp Plan recommendations was to do that, floodplains, wetlands could be more of a resource protection, prime agricultural lands could be used to promote agriculture.

Mary – There's a lot of history here and if we are going to get off to a good start I will just ask is there anything that has already been decided that we just don't know yet?

Eric – No. Any decisions that have been made were made at public Planning Board and Council meetings.

Rita Morin – We were only invited to a second meeting, second reading and public hearing. No public buy in, seemed very

Joe Gray – You have to take that up with the Council. Everybody in the room said don't do it but the Council still did it.

Rita Morin – Except for 1 or 2 people.

Eric – If the committee feels that was a bad idea and shouldn't have been allowed there could be recommendations made as part of the report.

Rita Morin – This is why people feel a little slighted by the process.

Dan Herrick- Does anybody have an idea how the first Ag study came about? It was a bunch of farmers. It was decided in farmers homes over a glass of milk and economic development staff went from farm to farm draft the zone. Farmers didn't want the land developed and losing their fields. Talked to old farmers many of which have passed away and they wanted to protect their land, almost as sacred ground to them, they wanted farming to continue undisturbed for generations but they couldn't make it on the land so they put out a rule that required newcomers to earn 50% income. Started at 80% and

reduced to 50%. Farmers wives started taking other jobs for income and insurance because farmers today can't afford taxes, insurance and mortgage insurance – you can't do that on the income from farming today. Machinery and other items make it different today that it was. We may not be able to get back to the way it was.

Reading stakeholders list and many do not have skin in the game. They don't get up every morning and farm. Whatever we decide, we have to get it approved when we bring it to the council, we have to sell this to them(Planning Board, Council and staff).

Mary – I am glad this conversation kept going, thank you Megan for putting official agenda on hold. I think we are at the heart of what we are trying to do and have a takeaway: there are a lot of people here with skin in the game and fingers in the dirt, skin in the game and make their living in lots of ways. Income streams are a challenge, whatever we come up with better make sense to people who do this every day and if it doesn't it is just language on a piece of paper; and it also has to make sense for people like me that don't earn a living in agriculture but also care and believe it is import for our future, then we will know we are on the right track. The people that do this every day need to call out what does and doesn't work. If someone like me puts out an idea that doesn't work, you have to say, it doesn't work that way, maybe in a magazine, but not in daily life. Honesty, if we are making this a credible process, and why would we be doing this if it was not a credible process, we do hold it in our hands to make this valuable if we can have just this kind of the discussion.

Eric – Staff is hoping to put the questions in front of this group and have these kinds of dialogues and come out of it with your input but also what you are hearing from others in the community doing the work and come out of it with recommendations that you and the community can support. Ultimately we will have to sell it to the Planning Board and Council but with wide discussions and input we will have wide buy in and support and people showing up at the Planning Board and Council saying: This group did good work, this is better than where we are today and this is a set of directions that we need to move in. It's not a perfect world but maybe we can make it better for agriculture in Auburn.

Karen Bolduc – We shouldn't sell ourselves short here, we may be getting off to a bumpy start with the process. The idea that we have to sell our work to the Planning Board and Council, yes, but they listen. If you have a group of people that make a recommendation, it will be considered, if it wasn't then why are we here. We have a shot to come up a consensus on a set of actions or goals that we want to see for Auburn and we can be heard in a professional way. We shouldn't assume that what we say is going to be irrelevant.

David Haines – Some history, in about 1975 a City Council decided under pressure from real estate developers to open the entire Ag zone to house lots. It was voted on by the Council, I fought it, a number of us hired a lawyer and we went to court and we stopped it. It was stopped because their decision was not consistent with the comprehensive plan and zoning is required to be consistent with the comp plan. There are ways to get things done.

Rita Morin – Went door to door and worked very hard. The room was full and everyone spoke against it except for one person, maybe two. Everyone left after that item, it felt defeating. It was frustrating. Leads into community representation – are we including anyone from recreation?

Joe Gray - There was one person in favor, our new Mayor. Everyone else was against it and the Council was for it.

Dan Herrick – This meeting wasn't really publicized, once we get going on this and start getting more public the public will start coming forward.

Rita Morin - If we are going to sell it this needs to be a golden plan.

Dan Herrick – I has to be something that works for everyone.

Terry Daley – I'm looking at the purist side of this. We have zero growth in the Ag zone and I understand the goal to be to figure out why we have zero growth in the Ag zone. I'll make this statement: Nobody that doesn't presently own land in the Ag zone can come into the zone and do anything. I'll use you for an example if we decide to do something that allows you to earn more income from land in the Ag zone are you going to do that and I think the answer is obvious. Many farmers are up in age and may not take a risk like that. That being said under the present rules you are never going to get growth in the Ag zone because nobody can come in. I built a brand new horse stable in the Ag zone and I was crazy to do so. I'm very proud that I have, I have a beautiful place with 32 horses boarded but the average person can't get 50% of their income from farming and come in and start a farm. I'd love to hear how I can make more money on my property, you have to aim at that. How many people live in Ag that if you gave them the tools to create more income, would they be willing to? Good example, ask Maurice Keene, was a dairy farmer, he is not going to invest at 85 years old, very active for his age, but his daughter could only do something if he willed her the property. He has a 7 year old grandson who loves farming and he can't give him a piece of land to build a house on, he has to give him the far-how do you loosen up the rules to save Ag but allow it to grow? That is what I think you guys have to look at. You have to tell the Council the truth and that is the truth.

Mary Sylvester – We may have had enough conversation to start to clarify why we are doing what we are doing. It's a good idea in the first meeting to let some air into the conversation to start to inventory the questions and the issues and while we haven't got them all inventoried here, we may need somebody on a white board capturing what is on the table and these comments are helpful to jumpstart our engagement in this work. This is a good beginning and I hope that we look at the timeline that you want to get to and recognize that many of us don't know each other and we need this time to kick some of this stuff around and also understand the parameters. What is our commitment around frequency of meetings,

Megan- Language say as appropriate or necessary. The airing of concerns or issues is important and we debated how much information and issues that we have heard that we should bring to this meeting for data and summaries vs the next meeting.

Mary Sylvester – Do we want to inventory issues at the next meeting? And come ready to engage in the question st that you have heard but to create a meeting environment where we are not just going over your paper but we are bringing our own questions to the table.

Ken- Absolutely.

Joe Gray – Forgive me but I went to every City Council Meeting to do with this project and I think the goals are ill defined and I think this gentlemen (Terry Daley) hit the nail on the head. We have a couple of obstacles to growth in the ag zone, if that is what we want, if that is the goal, we don't need any of this we can sit down list problems and how do we fix it. We don't need to know the soils, we all know how to grow stuff, Mr Bell over here can grow more food than any of us can consume, hes our institutional grower that could sell to USM, my farm cannot sell to USM, it's way too small. I don't have the soils and I don't need them to tell me that, my soils are good for animals. Not a lot of it for produce, we all know the problems. Their interviews, to me, are just buckshot, just shooting out all kinds of questions that aren't focused on anything. The goals here are not well defined, what are we actually trying to accomplish? If it is to bring more farmers we all know the 50% rule is a problem. If it is to bring more houses maybe the 10 acre rule is a problem, but I don't want my neighbor who owns 800 acres and owns trailer parks to bring those in so I am not opposed to the 10 acre rule. But that doesn't mean somebody who owns less than 10 acres shouldn't be able to build a house if they are going to farm it. So there are a lot of issues but learning what someone from Lewiston thinks or Maine Farmland Trust or St Mary's Nutrition Center thinks about it is not important to me. It's people who live in the Ag zone and deal with it and if we make it better for everybody then those people can come in and do what they want to do.

Eric- The 50% rule and Housing are absolutely going to be important parts of the discussion. Are there other issues? Lets get them on the table.

Joe Gray – Downstairs here, that's and issue.

Dan Herrick – If we worked on the issues and loosened them up I think everyone in this room would get exactly what they want out of this group of meetings. But you have to get to the core root and the other thing we need to watch for is the State of Maine, this sovereignty law, there were people excite that this passed in the City of Auburn and the State stepped in and anyone that wants to process (meat) is done. We still have the same issues that we had processing and selling meat as we did before the sovereignty law passed in Auburn. The State regulates/protects forestry, not Eric, you deal with the State. We need to get through those obstacles before we can achieve the goals that we are setting here at this meeting to accomplish.

Eric- is establishing a place for local meat processing one of the obstacles we should wrestle with?

Dan – The biggest thing is that you have to get the State approval.

Rita Morin- United Farmer Veterans just purchased the Windham Butcher Shop and they are also turning that into an institute, co-packing and learning facility. There is a USDA butcher shop in Windham

and the plan is to be a co-op. They are working with our farms in the Penley Corner Road area, not just Auburn but not having to transport animals hundreds of mile for slaughter.

Eric- That's a major obstacle to getting the animals to market.

Terry Daley – I'm looking at that right now and theres only one place in Maine and you can't get into into it, they are backed up, Im looking at black angus and may have to go to NH for a certified facility.

Mary Sylvester – Well we have three things already identified and I'm sure there's more that could come up at the next meeting but what is the actual infrastructure needed to process meat. Can we do some of that here?

Terry Daley – But thats not the problem here. My son, if I had one can't take my place to farm unless I gave him my house, read the zoning and that's the problem. You need to take the zoning and say how can I change this, relax the 50% income standard but how am I going to prevent the trailer parks from coming in. Am I going to say one lot can build a house every 5 years? Every 7 years? How can I still keep it restricted but allow for the beef end of it, you have to allow for growth before you can even worry about that.

Karen Bolduc – That's true, those are tools thought and as a group we are going to have to decide what our goals are, and we are empowered to do that, so we can choose what we want to have for goals, for process. I'm going to take that at face value at face value, I know there are City Councilors that follow a style of political leadership that we may not like but I think that we have an opportunity here so I'm optimistic about that, you can consider that naïve if you wish. I think the first step is to decide as a group what our goals are and then start looking at tools like Ag zoning and relaxing the 50% rule that gets all the attention. Those are tools available to foster the goals that we have. Step 1, before we get to tools and changes, are we trying to encourage agriculture, are we trying to conserve agricultural lands, what are our goals, are they shared? They are probably not all the same but I bet they're not all that far off, it sounds like we have a lot of common threads. Growing our Ag sector sustainably sounds like a common thread. If we focus on goals first then we can talk about tools.

Joe Gray – So what's your goal, name one.

Karen Bolduc – Thanks for asking Joe, I think it's important to grow the agricultural sector, to grow in a sustainable way, we have a lot of gorgeous land that personally I don't want to see it opened to unfettered development. Auburn is poised to be an agricultural leader in the State of Maine and we could make it a beautiful thing, if we approach the process softly and say: How do we encourage what we want to encourage? I want to see more agriculture, I love the vision that I'm hearing in the discussion about sons and grandsons and families farming in the City so that is a goal for me to see the agricultural sector grow and be supported while conserving agricultural lands from unfettered development.

Joe Gray – So David, youre probably the only one in the room or even in the City that meets the 50% rule.

David Bell – And I can share a story with you, you talk about stewards of the land, that’s what we are because we make a living with the soils, we want the best, we treat it the best, for the best yields. It’s a lot closer to home than you think. The City of Auburn, I did a building expansion about 10 years ago, because I can produce I needed places so that I can package, store and load trucks so we could expand and the only push back I had was really the City of Auburn. I don’t do this a lot but it was not a good experience. We (David and Eric) had a meeting at the farm when we were buttoning up before harvest and he needed the space and that was the pushback, it made me think that expanding was not something I wanted to do again but that was what I needed to get the new markets.

Ken-What was the push back about?

David Bell – I went through the process of engineering plans and permitting and there were certain people that, the common sense of it all was missing. We are all here saying agriculture is good what can we do to help agriculture, that was a big part of my business. It created more business and dealing with Walmart, Market Basket, wholesalers, direct delivery to over 50 restaurants in the area and lug everything in 50 LB bags. Larger quantities go out in 5-10 LB bags so I needed these buildings to automate so he could do it faster.

Dan Herrick-What was your value, hundreds of thousands?

David Bell – Yes. Weighing thousands of pounds in small bags and we package and ship all winter. State of the art facility with ventilation and all that is needed.

Ken – So the City would not let you build the buildings.

David Bell – No the engineered plans came and it took about a month. The biggest problem is once I was permitted they came back and wanted to change things,

David Haines – Sounds like a managerial problem at the City, not the Ag zone.

David Bell –Right but that was my story, trying to expand and become profitable to continue, it was big investment and it was not greeted like, Yes! How many more employees? I was asked that and there were a few, more tax revenues.

Eric- One of the things we can look at is, are there any local standards that our Council can change to make it easier for agricultural expansions?

Mary Sylvester – And recommendations to the City Manager as well.

David Bell –We have to expand to keep up with universities and supermarkets. The Walmarts want the local feather in their cap and I can supply the distribution center across the river from August to September and the food bank, I just put up 8 tons for the food bank today at a great deal, the smaller gourmet potatoes because the restaurants want large ones for French fries. Walmark, Market basket wants medium.

Terry Daley – The City wasn't easy to me as I went to expand my barn. 7000 bales of hay and local grain annually bought so the horses represent more than just horses locally. There was no gray, everything was black and white and he had to change his plan to get a permit. He had to put a 2'x2'x1' thick concrete pad on ledge to get a permit.

Unknown- Is that a local or State code problem?

Terry – Local problem with black and white.

David Bell – I had to downsize my first phase because the footprint was too big and I would have had to put a sprinkler system in to protect potatoes.

Eric – I believe that is when we eliminated the 200,000 cubic foot sprinkler standard.

David Bell – But there was no leeway for potatoes. I didn't need a sprinkler for potato storage.

Dan Herrick- So there's one thing we have to work on. The 50% rule is another thing. There's two.

Joe Gray – Anybody else have another one?

Terry Daley – I have one. I think you also should look at , once you make a recommendation and it has passed, how can the City help the farmer. I don't have the time but I would like to build a manure handling facility, not like a dairy farm, but I am told there is grant money available. It would be nice if the City could help me understand what process I have to go through. When I opened up my stable it would have been nice instead of the fight to get there if the City had said hey, lets have a grand opening and call the newspaper and cut a ribbon. Help a farmer out. This lady talked about food, nobody has approached me, I have acreage that could grow food.

Eric – We have heard that connecting people with available land with people that need land is a challenge that we might be able to address.

David Haines- There is another issue here. Everybody is concerned about the City budget, I live approximately 1 mile from the nearest other Auburn resident and over the years I have not had school bus or trash pickup, all of these services I didn't demand because I was so far away. You have got to watch the expansion of city services. It's wonderful for the City to support the farmers but you have to keep an eye on the costs because real estate taxes will go up to cover additional plowing, additional school bus pickup, police, fire coverage, all this stuff. Lewiston doesn't have to confront this because they are not as big.

Dan- That's why we don't plow your road.

Mary Sylvester – It's quarter of eight and I am wondering if we should give some thought to when we want to meet next. Doesn't have to set a pattern for frequency but.

David Bell - How many times per month we have a lot to talk about

Kim Finnerty – November and December are challenging and I have Christmas poinsettias and I grow all the time

Dan Herrick – That’s when farmers are available.

Mary – week of December 11th?

Ken – One of us can be there.

Bill Sylvester – We hired a consultant because we were trying to do additional work and may not want to tie up Eric.

Eric- I also want to avoid and perception that I am overly influencing the process. We want this to be committee driven.

Bill Sylvester – Do we go to Eric or the consultant for questions. How often can you be there. Should we have a copy of your contract.

Megan- That’s up to you twice a month will be difficult in person. We can provide information as needed.

Bill Sylvester – Is the Comprehensive Plan on the website? The Blackwell Report.

Eric – The Blackwell report is there, the Comp Plan is there on the City Website but we will add a link from the Ag study website to the Comp Plan.

Ken- Interestingly it (Blackwell Report) doesn’t mention agriculture.

Bill Sylvester – It was scared to death of scattered development.

Eric – I can send the link out.

Bill Sylvester – Maybe you guys can help us get through all the materials and summarize them. In the past an attorney (Curtis Webber) raised the issue that if we change this, there has been a tax subsidy for over 50 years, to just drop that and let people take advantage and sell off their land after they have paid a lot less tax for 50 years, the basics of that ought to be understood.

Ken – Megan and I can do summaries from reports and key issues. We are happy to talk anytime to get you information and to help with process. We have a limited number of trips budgeted, 4-5 between the two of us. We could teleconference.

Bill Sylvester – Take a look at other nearby towns there are very few cows there as well. Help on what’s happened elsewhere.

Ken - has experience and information from other communities and can share as wanted by the group.

Question about website and document access.

Eric- explained website location - <http://www.auburnmaine.gov/pages/government/study-to-support-and-enhance-auburn-s-ag-and-resource-sector>

Bill Sylvester – Do we all understand the old Comp Plan recommendations and if they are working?

David Haines – I have a good sense but we are not living 50 years ago and we are looking forward. The days of large dairy farms are gone. In the future things are changing but we are seeing a movement towards smaller farms, local agriculture, organic farming with a higher profit margin. Id like to read old docs because they are interesting but will it help us plan for the next 50 years?

Ken-My sense is that when we summarize the docs as Dan said this was about limiting growth not agriculture(1:43:38)

END(2:04:34)