

Auburn Agricultural Committee

Minutes: 10 27 21 Approved: 11 30 21

Location: Moved to Zoom due to Covid issues at Senior Center

Recorder: Dave Griswold

Staff attending: Jay Brenchick

Attending: Dave Griswold, Bill Sylvester, Kathy Shaw, Joe Gray, Katie Boss, David Bell, Ed Michaud

Excused: Scott Blanchard

Absent: None

Guests: Chris Carson

Call to Order: 6:07 pm

Public Participation: None

1. **Membership:** Chris Carson accepted position of Associate Member following a **motion** to appoint him.
2. **9 28 21 Minutes** approved
3. **Funding and Grants Update:** Jay communicated that 47 grants, including Covid related, have been identified which could benefit farmers. Ag Pandemic grants focus is more for processors than farmers. State has information. Details will be added to the City Website. GOAUBURN.ME is being built. Those interested in pursuing grants should contact Jay. NRCS can help with technical grant preparation.
4. **GIS Update:** Joe reported that the Ap to link pictures to locations has been developed. Bill has pictures he will send to Joe.
5. **Snap Shot Tour:** Kathy reported that the tour held on 10 23 was a success. Attendees included Ag Committee members, Counselor Holly Lasagna and several members of the public. The tour highlighted Bell Farm operations, Caron Farm with infrastructure being renovated and Compassionate Composting operations. City staff and officials will be invited to future tours.
6. **Maine Farmland Trust invitation:** Katie said MFT could not commit to a presentation yet since it is short staffed at this point.

7. **Lewiston Falls Relicensing:** Dave reported that the Conservation Commission is monitoring the dam relicensing process. There will be a call for Brookfield staff, City staffs and interested parties on November 4.
8. **Zoning:** Bill reported on the Special Meeting/Public Hearing of the Planning Board held on 10 26. There were 6 attendees. There was discussion of the Lake Auburn Study and development issues in the watershed, housing, widening strips to equate Rural Residential, potential Rt I95 bypass and suburban residential limit of 2 units per acre. Path forward is not certain. Planning Board will meet on strip zoning proposal on 11 9. Any proposed zoning changes will need to be acted on after the new Comp Plan is adopted. The Committee passed a **motion** to submit the letter outlining the Committee's concerns at the 11 9 Planning Board meeting. Kathy will sign as Chair over all Committee members' names.
9. **Solar Project Proposal:** Discussion included recently approved and proposed projects. It is understood that Planning Board must review projects after 1% of Ag Zone land is used for solar projects. At this point, about ½% has been developed. Kathy will ask Eric Cousens about any pending projects, and Jay will forward a link to the ordinance.
10. **Budget Request:** Kathy will develop a request to address cost of events and promotions. Jay will check with City Mgr. about the best way to bring a request for funds forward.
11. **Local Food:** Katie will meet with School Food Director concerning local sourcing on 10 28. One potential option is 50# bags of small potatoes from the Bell Farm.
12. **New Business:** Kathy communicated that Chris Lewis, a North Auburn dairy farmer, had experienced a serious equipment related accident. The Committee asked Kathy to send him a card. Katie will check with Maine Farmland Trust about potential assistance.
13. **Action Items**
 - a. Joe will complete farm inventory.
 - b. Kathy will deliver our letter to the Planning Board on 11 9.
 - c. Jay will explore CIP potential for ag/forestry sector.
 - d. Kathy will draft a budget request.

Next meetings: Tuesday, 11 30 2021, 6:00pm, location City Hall.

Tuesday, 12 28 2021, 6:00pm, location City Hall.

Pending agenda items:

1. Producers questionnaire/survey
2. Status of proposal to expand strip zoning.
3. Work Plan Development
4. Council presentation re Order 79-07202020
5. Food Sovereignty Law

6. Good Food Council of L-A to discuss urban agriculture opportunities.
7. Compost facility discussion
8. Craft a vision for agriculture in Auburn and share with community
9. Draft language to address inconsistencies between regulation of cannabis and ag infrastructure development.
10. Maine Farmland Trust Easement presentation

Adjourned: 7:46 PM