

Auburn Agricultural Committee

Minutes: 12 28 21 Approved: 1 25 22

Location: Senior Center with ZOOM connection

Recorder: Dave Griswold

Staff attending: Jay Brenchick

Attending: Dave Griswold, Bill Sylvester, Kathy Shaw, Joe Gray, Katie Boss, Chris Carson, David Bell, Scott Blanchard

Excused: None

Absent: Ed Michaud

Guests: Sam Boss, Conservation Commission; Amy Dieterich, Conservation Commission and Regulatory Review Board

Call to Order: 6:03 pm

Public Participation: None

- 1. Discussion of Mayor's memo of 12 21 21 proposing changes to Ag Committee and Conservation Commission, with impacts on Regulatory Review Board and Planning Board:** The proposal will be discussed at a City Council Workshop on 1 18 21. Discussion centered on questions raised about functions of the various committees and boards that will be driven by the Mayor's proposed changes. Clarification is needed. Concerns were raised about how the many efforts of the Ag Committee and Conservation Commission might be compromised by the proposed combination of the two groups, with an apparent net reduction in members. Comments were made about the experience and commitment of current members. Concerns were voiced about the potential loss of these volunteers who support City projects and staff, should the reorganization occur. The general consensus was that more information was needed to fully assess the impact of the proposed changes, but that the proposal was concerning. Kathy Shaw and Sam Boss will develop lists of 2021 accomplishments for the Ag Committee and Conservation Commission. They will also highlight the experience and expertise that volunteer members of both committees bring to the table. Members will reach out to City Council members prior to the 1 18 workshop to raise questions and concerns about the proposal.

2. **Solar Tour:** Several Ag Committee members toured the Nexamp project on Riverside Drive on 12 15. The project is slightly behind schedule but is making progress. The project infrastructure can be removed completely at the end of its' useful life.
3. **GIS Ag Project:** Joe continues to work with Rosemary Mosher to connect photos of Ag sites to the city GIS system. 70+ locations have been identified and photographed, with many to be added.
4. **Ag Committee funds:** The City Council has approved \$200 to be used for printed materials, Ag tour promotions etc.
5. **School Department local sourcing:** Katie recapped November discussions with the School Department concerning sourcing food from Auburn farms. Blackies is serving as an aggregator. There is some interest in Bell Farms small potatoes. See 11 30 21 minutes.
6. **Potential new member:** Matt, the new Blackies owner, may be interested in joining the committee.
7. **LA Farmers Market:** Kathy continues collaborate in efforts to look for a location for a 2022 LA Farmers Market. Market group is looking for a permanent location. Platz Field and Anniversary Park are possibilities. Discussions will continue in January.

New Business

1. **Bruce Bickford LR #2378:** Awareness raised that LR #2378 is being introduced and potentially could impact agricultural land statewide.
2. **State Programs brochure:** Joe is working on a brochure summarizing State land use tax programs as well as opportunities for conservation easements.

Action Items:

1. Kathy will develop list of 2021 accomplishments and members experience/expertise
2. Members will reach out to City Council concerning Mayor's proposal.

Next meetings: TBA

Pending agenda items:

1. Work Plan Review for 2022
2. Council presentation re Order 79-07202020
3. Producer survey
4. Possible presentation by Blackie's manager about aggregation for School Department
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. Maine Farmland Trust Easement presentation

Adjourned: 7:06 PM