

Auburn Agricultural Committee

Minutes 4 27 2021 approved 5 25 2021

Location: Senior Center / Pettengill Park, outside)

Recorder: Dave Griswold

Staff attending: Jay Brenchik

Attending: Katie Boss, Dave Griswold, Bill Sylvester, Kathy Shaw, Scott Blanchard, Joe Gray

Excused: David Bell, Michelle Melaragno

Absent: Ed Michaud

Guests: None

Call to Order: 5:45 pm

Public Participation: None

1. **3 23 21 minutes:** approved.
2. **Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program.** VMFSA was developed by the Town of Winslow and supported by the State. Discussion centered around if and when to review the program for potential application in Auburn. It is not currently a priority for the committee.
3. **Committee Work Plan Discussion.** Now that the City State of Emergency has been lifted, the committee has about four months to report back to the Council about progress on the Council's initial charge, Council Order 79-07202020. Most of the work has been done and presented to the Council informally on 4 5 2021. The discussion centered on developing a list of work plan objectives, prioritizing them, and assigning work groups to move them forward. Items discussed included potential zoning proposals, Maine Farmland Trust list of criteria for "Farm Friendly" communities, Right to Practice Forestry Ordinances, and need to consider the results of the questionnaire under development.
4. **Committee Internal Survey.** Discussion centered around:
 - a. The top three things the committee should accomplish in 2021
 - b. How the committee can be most effective
 - c. Processes, structure, make-up and meetings

- i. Consensus was that the committee wishes to develop a plan for the Ag Zone rather than be reactive.
- ii. Zoning recommendations need to be developed. Jay suggested that the workgroup use Eric Cousens as a resource.
- iii. Marketing plan for Ag Committee, including survey mailers to city's farmer mailing list; message board shown on TV between Council Workshops and Meetings; digital roadside signs; webpage
- iv. More focus on working groups to fulfill work plan. Zoning and Solar Workgroup (Joe, Bill, David Bell, Katie); Education and Outreach Workgroup (Kathy, Dave, Katie); Composting Facility Repurposing workgroup (longer term, participation tba).

5. Information Gathering Survey Development

- a. Still in progress

6. New Business

- a. Committee approved revised logo, with forest trees added.
- b. Dave will send Maine Woodland Owners conference presentations by Maine Forest Service on Invasive Species and Forest Pathogens to Liz Allen for posting on Ag Committee Webpage. Dave got permission to post them.
- c. Kathy announced that there will be no Auburn Farmers Markets this summer. Not enough vendors were willing to commit because of low volume of sales made last season.
- d. **Action Items:**
 1. Joe will reach out to Rep. Libby about Food Sovereignty Bill

Next meeting: Tuesday, 5 25 2021, 5:30pm tentatively at Sr. Center

Pending agenda items:

1. Zoning work group update
2. Producers questionnaire/survey
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. Review recent Ag committees (Crossroads, MAG-ARP) and learnings

Adjourned: 7:03 PM

