

Auburn Agricultural Committee

Minutes 12 1 2020 approved 12 29 20

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

Excused: Ed Michaud

Absent: Michelle Melaragno, Joe Gray

Call to Order: 5:35 pm

Public Participation: None

1. **10 27 20 minutes:** approved.
2. **Committee Information Sheet:** Info Sheet drafted by Dave Griswold and revised based on comments at 10 27 20 meeting was approved.
3. **Comprehensive Plan Discussion:**
 - a. Growing Ag economy is a priority.
 - b. Good Food Council input and recommendations should be considered.
 - c. Agreement that both Ag and Forestry should be addressed and included.
 - d. Need markets to determine what crops to grow. City economic development position should promote sale of agricultural and forestry products produced in Auburn where practical. Would Auburn Farmers consider a small annual subscription to support promotion of products (similar to Maine Potato Council members)?
 - e. Forest landowners should be able to access information about active forest management. Resources such as Maine Forest Service staff: Shane Duigan, District Forester and Andy Shultz, Landowner Outreach forester; Maine Forest Service website; Maine SFI website; Maine Woodlot Owners website etc.
 - f. Grants should be pursued with help of Auburn full time grant writer.
 - g. Processing capability is needed for meat, game and vegetables. Support of game processing may help with public acceptance of a processing facility.
 - h. Katie will send sample language from other towns.
4. **Ag Zone Survey needed**
 - a. Any research done will need Council approval.

- b. Data should be available from 2019 Bates survey.
- 5. **Other discussion items:**
 - a. Committee needs to review history of Ag Zone discussion for benefit of members i.e. Cross Roads Study, reports of prior Ag Committees.
 - b. Legislative outreach desired in Feb-March. Potential contacts Ned Claxton and Rep. Pingree. Evaluate state and federal resources and available grants.
 - c. Maine Farm to Institution group may be a good resource for us. Katie will explore.
 - d. Develop education and information sources. Webinars are likely better than meetings for a variety of reasons. Conservation Commission may be potential partner for some topics.
 - e. What is the possibility of making bulk purchases for resale to home canners?
 - f. Ag in Northeast poised for growth:
 - i. Highest number of young farmers in the nation.
 - ii. Transportation from big farms in Mid-West will become less competitive if emissions reduction becomes a priority.
- 6. Discussion of pros and cons of possible turnpike exit onto Rt 136 in South Auburn.

Action Items:

- 1. Katie Boss will send out comprehensive plan language from other municipalities.
- 2. Dave will send around sources of information for small woodlot owners.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 12 29 20, by Zoom

Pending agenda items:

- 1. Term length for Edmund Michaud
- 2. Discussion of AG/Forestry focus in Comprehensive Plan revision
- 3. Develop plan to address Council Order
- 4. Draft recommendations to Council from list of discussion topics above and “Is Your Community Farm Friendly” checklist.
- 5. Possibilities for Education outreach
- 6. Possibilities for meeting with state legislators

Adjourned: 7:15 PM

