

Auburn Agricultural Committee

Minutes 1 26 2021 approved 2 23 2021

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, Joe Gray, Ed Michaud

Excused: None

Absent: Michelle Melaragno

Call to Order: 5:34 pm

Public Participation: None

1. **12 29 21 minutes:** approved.
2. **Comprehensive Plan Discussion:**
 - a. Dave Griswold led the group through the chart he prepared comparing comp plan language from Windham, Gorham, Durham and Dover-Foxcroft.
 - b. Dave Griswold presented "Straw Man" language for Auburn Comp Plan. Discussion followed with several items suggested as additions, including cost of community services, forest acres harvested, cold storage, local food pledge, large and small scale agriculture, urban agriculture, organizations to coordinate with, and more emphasis on open space.
 - c. Dave will edit the "straw man" and circulate it to the group as draft language for the Ag/Forestry/Resource Protection section of the Comp Plan. When approved, Katie Boss will bring it forward to the Comp Plan Review Committee.
3. **City Council Order: actions taken and next steps**
 - a. Inventory of current commercial farm and value added production in Auburn.
 - i. Kathy Shaw reviewed draft questionnaire for target audience.
 - ii. Discussion followed concerning minor edits, need to explain survey's purpose, need to include home based value added activities, need to share results with survey participants to encourage participation, explain that Ag/Forestry/ Resource section will be added to comp plan, and how to reach target audience..

- iii. Katie Boss will edit questionnaire, send to Kathy Shaw and Joe Gray, who will coordinate with Liz Allen to solicit participation by Auburn farmers and producers.
 - b. Formulate a plan to increase local and regional market opportunities
 - i. Survey above will inform next steps
 - ii. Discussion of pros and cons of an Auburn brand
 - c. Local/regional awareness campaign for Auburn products
 - i. See b. above
 - d. Calculate long and short terms food needs of Auburn residents
 - i. Katie Boss has reached out to Good Shepard Food Bank. Data being developed.
 - e. Assess local food systems impact from Covid and projected shortages or disruptions in food access.
 - i. Katie Boss has asked Healthy Androscoggin to assist in developing data.
 - f. Investigate and provide recommendations on zoning and economic incentives
 - i. Working group was established by unanimous vote to pursue this. Members: Joe Gray, David Bell, Bill Sylvester, Ed Michaud.
 - g. Propose zoning amendments that would facilitate with minimal conflict, subsistence and commercial agriculture production in all non-ARP zones.
 - i. To be considered by working group see section f. above
- 4. Housing Discussion
 - a. Katie Boss reviewed discussions at the Council
 - i. Push to build 1000 units over next 5 years
 - ii. Plan to build from city center out
 - iii. No proposals to build in the Ag zone to date.
 - iv. Discussion of reducing number of zones to allow infill and multifamily units
- 5. Other discussion items
 - a. Maine Biz article on “Forager” which allows farmers and producers to post and sell products on line.
 - b. “Food Brigade” in Portland is making inquiries about potatoes and other products. New market servicing about 2200 people.
- 6. Future possible agenda items
 - a. Historical review of recent Ag committees (Crossroads, MAG-ARP) and learnings
 - b. Maine Farm to Institution presentation
 - c. Craft a vision for agriculture in Auburn and share with community

Action Items:

1. Dave will edit comp plan “straw man” and circulate draft.
2. Katie will edit questionnaire and review with Kathy and Joe before sending to Liz Allen.
3. Katie will share any information developed by Good Shepard and Healthy Androscoggin.
4. Zoning work group will organize.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 2 23 2021, 5:30pm by Zoom

Pending agenda items:

1. Review recent Ag committees (Crossroads, MAG-ARP) and learnings
2. Maine Farm to Institution presentation
3. Craft a vision for agriculture in Auburn and share with community
4. Educational offerings from the Ag Committee

Adjourned: 6:51 PM