

Natural Products and Agriculture Working Group

Minutes 6 26 25 Approved 8 28 25

Location: Bell Farm

Recorder: Dave Griswold

Staff attending: Eric Cousens

Attending: Kathy Shaw, Joe Gray, Dave Griswold, David Bell, Cloe Meyers, Grant Meyers, Chris Carson

Excused: Pam Rousseau

Absent: Ed Michaud

Guests: Eric Cousens

Call to Order: 6:10 pm

Public Participation: None

1. **Minutes:** Approved minutes from 4 24 25 and 5 29.25
2. **USDA 2022 Androscoggin County Farm Census:** The most recent Farm census report was reviewed and discussed,
3. **Farm Plans YTD:** Eric Cousens shared three farm plans submitted so far this year. They are all located in South Auburn. Two have been approved to date, one is in final stages. Proposals include rehab of hay fields and forestry; hybrid chestnut trees; fruit production and fruit trees nursery. There was discussion of methods to monitor farm progress and assure accountability for plan implementation.
4. **Local Food Council Funds:** We agreed to pursue Chris Piercy's request to use some of our \$1500 donated by the Local Food Council to support an initiative to install and expand raised bed gardens at East Auburn School.
5. **Use of Funds:** \$60 was donated at the Seed Event this spring. Discussion of how to use our available funds. Ideas include support for a pop-up farmers markets / Sunday Morning Bakery, and Fall Farm & Forest Tour.
6. **Fall Farm & Forest Tour:** Date is planned for Oct 18. Outreach is under way to sign up participants, including displays by "makers".
7. **Comp Plan:** Dave reported that there will be efforts to outreach to the community to get input concerning development of the Comp Plan. There is a meeting scheduled on July 9 at ELHS. The plan will not be finalized until 2026.

New Business:

- 1. Senior Vouchers for Farmers Markets:** Kathy and Cloe provided perspective on this program aimed at getting local produce to seniors, and the challenges involved.
- 2. Hempcrete House:** Discussion of a newly built house using hempcrete technology on Auburn. Plan is to invite homeowners to explain the process at a future meeting.
- 3. Meeting Locations:** Dave agreed to try to reserve Room 204 at Auburn Hall on the last Thursday of each month through Dec 2026. Working Groups are no longer able to meet at the Senior Center. (Note: this has been confirmed by Emily Carrington, City Clerk)

Next meetings: July 31 at LACFB Nursery, North Auburn Road behind Lake Auburn Community Center. We will tour the Nursery to see work done through a city matched grant from Project Canopy.

Adjourned: 7:25 PM