



Agricultural Advisory Board

Remote Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2021

7:00 - 8:30 PM

Attending: Ken Hartlage, Lucy McKain, David Sears, Sherrill Rosoff
Guests: Deb Fountain, Tony Beattie

Meeting came to order at 7:00 PM.

Minutes of 2/10/21 were unanimously approved.

Updates:

1. The Agricultural Advisory Board submitted the Northbound Ventures proposal but, should it be approved, it will require an RFP process as the amount is above \$6,000.
2. Sherrill Rosoff reached out to Susan McCarthy to explore a joint meeting with PACH
3. Sherrill Rosoff reached out to MDAR to discuss possible inventory of farmland that could qualify for the APR program.
4. Sherrill Rosoff sent Mark Mathews information about Worcester Regional Food Hub (WRFH) and Lowell's UTEC kitchen
5. Ken Hartlage has provided the 2016 business plan for the Worcester Regional Food Hub. Our goal is to encourage members of EDAC to visit Worcester to meet Shon Rainford, manager of the WRFH to learn more about it.
6. Possible visit to UTEC as well.
7. Sherrill Rosoff spoke with Paula Terassi regarding the stormwater bylaw; the issue is not with the bylaw, but the ensuing regulations that will be developed by Ken Kalinowski and we should reach out to him.
8. Sherrill Rosoff recommend website "Berkshire Grown" to the group as a template for what we might be able to do going forward.
9. We will continue to stay in touch with the Coastal Food Shed which is exploring development of a food hub in the southeastern Massachusetts area.
10. Sherrill Rosoff sent around a draft of our Board's activities for inclusion in the town annual report. Discussion ensued with recommendations to include work on Food Hub, Open Farm Day, Right to Farm bylaw. A second draft will be circulated for review and approval. Must be submitted to the town clerk as soon as possible.

11. Next step after Ag Board presentation to Select Board is to have the motion to approve MGL chapter 40, section 8L sent to Town Council for approval for Spring Town Meeting warrant article.

12. Our Right to Farm Bylaw is missing paragraphs on dispute resolution and notification. Do we present at Spring Town meeting at the same time we are presenting warrant article to become an Agricultural Commission? Decision was made to defer the Right to Farm Bylaw revisions to the Fall.

13. Sherrill Rosoff reported 18 signatures from farmers so far supporting creation of an Agricultural Commission. Discussion followed about further actions the Board could take to create public support prior to the Spring Town Meeting. Video clips of local farmers, etc. Ken Hartlage advised that we focus on how an Agricultural Commission will benefit the community otherwise there's a lot of chatter in town that too many committees are being formed. Essential presentation questions: What's in it for me and what am I risking? We need to make a sales pitch that there's no downside, only upside.

Deb Fountain reviewed the Master Plan Implementation Team Status Report.

In addition to our Master Plan recommendations there are 3 new Open Space Recreation ones on a second worksheet labeled OSR. Sherrill Rosoff will send the spreadsheet around to members for comments. Due back April 9th.

Deb Fountain mentioned Freedom's Way - funding for town-wide events that could be important for Open Farm Days. AARP maybe another source.

Lucy McKain provided an update on Sundaes in the Neighborhood: Open Farm's Day. The goal is to get the public to visit our local farms - two programs (One in July and one in October). Farms can do whatever program but we provide marketing, signs, and tickets to go to an Ice cream stand. Lucy has been visiting local dairies in particular, to qualify for the grant (DBIC). Two dairies are on board: hers and Charlie Tully's. Wes Goss is not opening this summer but he's selling to Trombley Gardens in New Hampshire and Tully's. She would love each dairy to be a part of it. Lucy believes there's interest; will continue to make drafts for the grant. Tony Beattie suggested a grand finale at one of the farms in the evening - perhaps a concert. We do have local musicians (Lynn Lenker and Phil have a band). We could sell tickets and raise money for the Agricultural Commission. The library has open mike nights and a lot of musicians go there to perform so we could reach out to them. Could collaborate with Pepperell Business Association's event. Ice cream is donated by Doc Davis. PBA opens it up to charities, NCT has done it - and ice cream is free. How does PBA get the word out? Advertises on the town website and it's very popular. We should reach out to Joanne Smith, the new PBA president.

Ken Hartlage: NCT has about 25 acres of farmland it's looking to lease right off of River Road. It's open; used for hay and corn and trying to get anyone who's interested to farm it. Nashoba Conservation Trust is starting a pilot program on 4 acres in agri-forestry. Jordan Keating is coming down from Vermont to plant 300 varietal American chestnuts, 1,000 paw-paw and persimmon trees - to grow nut crops and build carbon sequestration at the same time. Lucy suggested Tufts New Entry farming program - always looking for lands to rent. Lucy will send Ken the link. NCT is looking to have a public benefit component and will set up an educational activity there such as a walking path through the 4 acres. Larger planting will take place in the fall and they'd like to make it a community project.

Ken Hartlage moved to adjourn, Lucy McKain seconded.

Meeting adjourned, 8:30 PM.