

AGRICULTURE COMMISSION MINUTES

December 7, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sarah M Silk, Chair/Secretary; Lawreen Strauch, Vice-Chair; Dave Strauch, Katy Peternel

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dave & Wendy Rodgers, Marge Strunk

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Macy Gotthardt

ALTERNATES ABSENT: Kurt DeVlyder

BOS LIAISON ABSENT: Dave Senecal

I. Approve Minutes of 11-2-23:

Sarah Silk, Chair, opened the meeting at 6:45 PM. She appointed Macy Gotthardt, alternate, to sit for Wendy Rodgers.

Sarah read an email received from Athena Contus, who had received the Minutes which included her presentation. Under III, page 2, 2nd paragraph, line 2, change to “the bees *consume* 10 LBS of honey a month during the winter”. With a motion from Katy Peternel and a second from Dave Strauch, the Minutes were unanimously accepted as amended.

Prior to the meeting Sarah had met with Paul Vivian and he delivered the 2023 2nd Division trophy to her at the Library. The winning 4th of July entry was the Ag Commission float entered by No View Farm, Lawreen & Dave Strauch.

II. Updates: Farmers Market (Nadine San Antonio) / CCCD (Catherine Default):

Nadine San Antonio advised via email that the first Farmers Market in spring will take place in May 2024. A date certain for the specific Thursday has yet to be determined.

No new information was received from CCCD.

III. Legislative Activity/Updates (Katy Peternel):

Katy Peternel noted there are 20 committees and she is a member of the Education Committee. Katy will supply Sarah with contact information for Barbara Comtois, Agriculture Committee member from Barnstead. (Note: later in the meeting, it was suggested that Barbara be contacted as a speaker for the February 1st Ag Comm meeting.)

There was a discussion regarding agricultural use noises being exempt from local noise ordinances and allowing processing of red deer and bison. Katy explained that red deer are farmed deer, not wild. Possible 2024 legislative topics: custom meat shops (not USDA); expansion of food freedom

relative to selling agricultural products out of homes and licensing; and a study committee relative to state vs federal meat processing laws (what can be sold, across state borders).

IV. Annual Town Book Report:

A draft of the Annual Report was handed out to members with Sarah asking for additions or amendments. Now that Division 2 has been clarified, it will be inserted in the narrative.

V. Old Business/Any Other Business:

Term expirations were reviewed, Lawreen, Wendy and Katy expire about March 2024. An email or note should be forwarded to Amy Muccio, Town Manager's Office, with an indication of interest.

Sarah read statistics she had received as Site Coordinator of HHW as regards Bayer-Monsanto and Round-Up: 44% of farmers are poisoned by various pesticides, equal to 20,000 deaths/yr; Bayer-Monsanto recently lost its 4th straight court case (Missouri, relative to Round-Up related cancer – WHO 2015, US 2018); Mexico has banned GMO from white corn used in human consumption (tortillas & masa dough) but the corporate monopoly connection of agrochemical companies in the US seed market and commodity food trade are pushing against the ban; global biodiversity is down 69% since 1970; and 7 firms dominate poultry, pig, cattle, and aquaculture genetics.

Since 2018, Tyson, JBS, Cargill, Nestle, and Maple Leaf Foods have dominated with over \$80 billion in sales. Tyson, JBS, Smithfield, and Marfig control slaughterhouses. Because the meatpacking plants own the animals they slaughter, not buying in the open market place, smaller processing places are unable to compete. Smithfield has a pending case for \$42 million relative to the largest distributors accusing the largest packers of suppressing supply.

VI. Next Meeting Date – Adjourn:

Sarah reported the Library Bradley room has been scheduled for 1st Thursdays in 2024 with the exception of July 4th. There will be: no January meeting; February 1st may have an Ag Committee legislator and perhaps in March, a discussion with Maker's Mill regarding a plant pot return station/unwanted extra vegetable plant free exchange; depending on BOS appointments, the April meeting may not be held if new/returning members have not been notified or sworn in.

A possible seedling sale, cancelled for covid, was suggested as well as a tie-in to Earth Day.

With a motion from Katy and a second from Macy Gotthardt, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:55.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah M Silk, Secretary

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