

## AGRICULTURE COMMISSION MINUTES

February 1, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sarah M Silk, Chair; Lawreen Strauch, Vice-Chair; Dave Strauch, Katy Peternel, Wendy Rodgers; David Rodgers; Marge Strunk

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Macy Gotthardt

ALTERNATES ABSENT: Kurt DeVlyder

BOS LIAISON ABSENT: Dave Senecal

GUESTS: Barbara Comtois, Barnstead Representative, Sue Weeks & Guy Pike, BOS; Tuftonboro Ag Comm

I. Approve Minutes of 12-7-23:

Sarah Silk, Chair, opened the meeting at 6:45 PM.

NOTE: After the presentation: the Minutes were unanimously approved with a motion from Wendy Rodgers and a second Katy Peternel just prior to III.

II. Barbara Comtois, State Rep, Env & Ag Committee:

Sarah introduced Barbara Comtois with a review of her background informatin to Commission members.

Barbara initiated her review of legislative matters discussing the shortage of butcher shops. Many of those existing are USDA inspected, but not certified, which leads to issues for sales. HB-1463 is another bill that will be in study committee and there is a need to address criteria for facilities and a brochure that would better outline what is needed in a butcher shop in one document. Baked goods and criteria for jam, rabbits, poultry, beef, poultry, and pork were discussed.

Sue Weeks noted it was required for her to have a commercial refrigerator to protect public health and safety if she wanted to sell pickles.

Barbara noted farmers and bakers want to sell quality products. Today, the speed of social media would kill sales immediately for any tainted products. She noted that NH is considered food insecure based on the fact only 6% of the food needed to feed the population is grown within the state.

Katy Peternel addressed outside sources and several comparisons were made to the lack of product during the pandemic due to worker shortages and trucking delivery issues. Drought and too much rain have also caused interruptions to food deliveries.

Barbara spoke of the need to promote local foods and how farmers need to be creative to sell their products. Pork must be USDA certified for sales but not USDA smoked, it can be smoked at the farm.

The regulations need to address labeling lab grown meat, crickets are considered a protein ingredient and used in NY, kangaroo meat, etc. Requiring labels can result in refusals to send the food products to NH.

Use of drones for spraying pesticides has come up. Game cameras require a name and address on the unit, yet police departments can mount them without a warrant as an example of items needing clarification.

There was a discussion about selling directly to restaurants, people, but not for resale at stores.

Wendy Rodgers had questions about sheep and goats.

When Lawreen Strauch asked who makes the rules, Barbara explained there are laws, then there is Administrative rule making.

The seasonality of using butcher shops adds to congestion and inability to get an appointment. Dave Strauch noted some places are making appointments 2 years out.

Barbara noted 3 USDA shops currently: Barnstead, Goffstown, Conway's burned and there is one more. There is a Senate bill for local butchers to sell in-state. There is USDA inspection, also state inspection, and an onerous amount of paperwork. That led to a discussion about the difference in scope of New England farms with few animals and the mid-west that would be dealing in processing thousands of animals every day.

Katy spoke about the Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules which can be seen on the computer and the rule making register.

Barbara spoke about a Littleton rooster that violated a noise ordinance and a southern NH farm that sprayed at night to avoid interfering with bees. Last year a bill addressed agriculture as being exempt from noise ordinances.

Marge Strunk questioned chain saw noise with Barbara replying that would be exempt because logging is an agricultural pursuit. Marge asked if any rooster counted with Barbara responding the if it met the definition of farm under RSA21:34-A, it would. Corn cannons are covered with times of use reported to the local police department, and dogs protecting livestock are not fined for barking.

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

Sarah read highlights from the 1-25-24 GSN article regarding Nadine San Antonio's connection between NH Food Bank programs, local farms in Effingham, Conway, Sandwich, Bartlett, and Ossipee, that will offer CSA's for SNAP recipients. Sign up for the program will be locally at Makers Mill 2-9-24 from 1-3 and Tamworth Farmers Market 2-10-24 from 10-noon. Stores that will accept the CSA vouchers are Wolfeboro, Tamworth, and Mt Washington Valley Farmers Markets, Wolfeboro Food Coop and Top of the Hill Farm.

IV. Legislative Activity/Updates (Katy Peternel):

Katy addressed a farm to school bill which didn't pass in the Dept of Ed committee. There were issues with pricing of food and the higher prices of local produce etc. More data is required for a Pilot Program, perhaps 1 school in each county.

Barbara noted that most produce in this region is harvested prior to the start of school and non-USDA inspected meat not being eligible.

Katy explained the process of a bill from the House going thru to the Senate and changes and returning to the House and the very large number of bills in certain committees.

There was a short discussion about Paint Disposal bill HB 1504-FN initiated by Sarah. After a brief discussion and a quick check, Barbara noted Tuesday, 2-6-24 @ 3:30 PM there will be a hearing in LOB room 301.

V. Old Business/Any Other Business:

Sarah reviewed Ag Comm term expirations for: Lawreen, Katy, Wendy. Requests for reappointment should be emailed or dropped off with Amy Capone, Town Mgr Office for March 6<sup>th</sup> if possible for inclusion on the BOS Agenda when they address such issues in March or April.

VI. Next Meeting Date – Adjourn:

March 7<sup>th</sup> program will be one of two speakers: Doug Smithwood or perhaps a discussion with Josh Arnold about the plant swap/empty seedling pot turn-in suggested last fall. More info to follow.

With a motion from Katy and a second from Lawreen, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah M Silk, Secretary