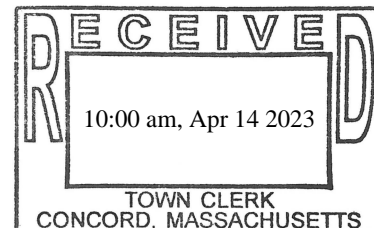


Ag Committee Minutes for March 9th 2023 meeting via Zoom



Attendees:

Melissa Maxwell, co-chair, Barrett's Mill Farm
Liza Bemis, co-chair, Hutchins Farm
Steve Verrill, member, Verrill Farm
Happy Goethert, member, Scimone Farm
Dan Schmid, member, Walden Woods Farm
Joe Rogers, clerk, associate member
Brian Cramer, Hutchins Farm
Lois Suarez, pollinator committee
Chip Poutasse, Brigham Farm
Emily Wheeler, visitor

7:03 PM meeting opened, Liza Chaired

Review Minutes: Minor adjustments made to February 2023 minutes, Melissa motioned to approve, seconded by Dan, Minutes approved.

News about Concord Farms and Farmers: Review of Colonial Gardens Tour. Growing flowers to meet the holiday deadlines requires precision planning of time and temperature. At Hutchins farm the new greenhouse almost complete. Brian might experiment with grafting cucumbers onto squash stock. Emily told of the Village University series of talks about early Concord farming history wherein Steve and Lise and Ben Elliot had spoken. Recordings might become available at library.

Spring Forum Discussion: It will be Wednesday April 26th in the auditorium at Harvey Wheeler 6-9 PM. 7-8:30 for the public. Someone has to get the key 2-5 before the event - Melissa can probably do that. Speaker is Sam and the panel will be Steve, Anna and Mark. Does Harvey Wheeler have a microphone PA system? Melissa will find out, and if needed will arrange a time to test system with Dan. An on-line form for people to submit questions to either the speaker or to the panel is posted on the Ag Day website. Do we want to have some questions ready to prep the panel speakers? Ask panelists to introduce themselves with basics like: 1) who are you? 2) tell me about the farm you work on? 3) tell us about your tillage history? How should we invite other towns to participate? Steve can see about Lincoln and Sudbury, he will talk to their Ag Commissions/Committees. Melissa will talk to Clark Farm. As we get closer everyone should ramp up their social media promotions of it. Liza submitted the event to the town calendar, concord living, and the concord bridge. Community gardeners are interested. Steve is willing to provide some refreshments but for how many people? Our guess is 40-60? Gaining Ground has requested an information table, if other farms would like a table let Melissa know, we have plenty. Melissa will send another email out to the farms to see if anyone wants one.

Quick Ag Day logistics update: Library is almost committed to participate. Town is expected to sign off, waiting for them to sign off on both the official request and on the banner request, but forms are in. We are on the police's calendar. We need to delineate what non-profits are suitable to participate and maybe have a more formal criteria as more folks are interested in coming. Multiple garden clubs now

want to participate, but there are lots of non profits with non ag related objectives that want to come. Need to give priority to farms for spaces.

Bag Fee update: The law seems to indicate that the Health Dept has authority, but they have punted it to the select board. Henry Dane has been consulted but unclear were to go next. He had suggested talking to the Board of Health who recommended to talk to the Select board. Other select people might also be contacted? Liza will reach out to them all. We don't want to have to submit an amendment to the article at town meeting 2024 if we don't have to. Cambridge only taxes handled bags. 10 cent bag is 1 cent tax plus the vendor must produce a receipt and remit the sales tax to the state. They had their Health Department be in charge of how it was implemented so we are hoping for the same.

Committee Members terms up for renewal: Liza, Steve and Dan memberships due to expire. Happy nominates for their renewal. Joe Seconds. Unanimous vote affirmative.

Other business: 250 anniversary committee is having discussions about how events get approved to be "official 250 events". AG committee wants participate. Grace had suggested doing something by the monument on old Bedford Road, everyone still thinking about what might be a good idea. Steve still wants to participate in the parade perhaps.

Chip asked about the Barrett Mills Farm lease renewal public request for proposals. Melissa can't comment on it because they are submitting for renewal. The RFP was advertised in Concord Bridge newspaper. 5 year with 5 year option to renew.

Farmers report wages and costs are increasing. Pressure on prices.

Steve told the story of his pump house. He also remembered that to till the soil in a greenhouse it's best to use a mule.

Public Comment: None

Next meeting: Set for April 13th at 7pm on zoom. Happy motioned to adjourn, Steve seconded.

Meeting ended 8:26 P.M.