

Adams Agricultural Commission

Meeting Minutes

May 23, 2023 at 7:01 p.m.

Adams Town Hall

8 Park Street, Adams, MA 01220

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In attendance: Meg Bantle (MB), Sonia McWhirt (SM), Christina Satko (CS), and Loren Steins (LS), Natasha Bourdeaux (NB)

Also present: Joe Novak, Carleigh Oparowski, Avery Cunningham, Becky Ferguson

1. Call to order 7:01 pm
2. Old Business
  - a. Approval of the minutes
    - i. 3/21/23 name errors corrected. Motion to approve by CS seconded by LS  
Unanimously approved. NB abstain due to absence
  - b. Planning for the Future of your Farmland
    - i. Positive feedback on Feedback form
      1. SM to send thank you card to Tonia at Bounti Fare
  - c. Right to Farm updates
    - i. No updates yet from NB about wetlands guidelines
    - ii. LS update from Northampton Right to Farm
      1. Does not have cannabis provisions because it was illegal to grow when it was written.
      2. Cannabis and hemp growing is heavily regulated but not by the State or local Ag Commissions.
      3. LS printed articles from the *Hampshire Gazette* regarding cannabis regulations in other Western Mass Towns.
      4. NB suggests that cannabis is not yet under the purview of the Ag Commission as it stands now. But we should stay apprised of cannabis growing laws.
      5. CS mentions that there was an article in the Berkshire Eagle last week about farmers petitioning APR to allow hemp to be grown.
    - iii. Resource list
      1. SM suggests mailing the list out to farmers. MB suggests something "fridgable" like a postcard with the resources listed instead of just a printed piece of paper.
      2. No budget currently for a postcard, but we could approach community development for help for a project.
3. New Business
  - a. Ideas for new projects
    - i. Farmers's Market
      1. Farmer's Market used to exist in Adams in 2015 but didn't last.

2. MB suggests to connect to Berkshire Grown about a fall/ Holiday farmers and Maker Market
  3. Carleigh asks about a pop up market on her road near the glen at Chenail Crofts. Carleigh to connect to Events committee. Ag committee could help tell people about her event and find vendors for her.
- ii. Gather historic information about Adams farms
  1. NB says that Cheshire created a farming history book. We could start collecting data for a similar project.
  2. Joe suggests connecting to Eugene M at the Adams Historical Society as a point person.
- iii. Event planning for younger generations in Adams? What can we offer new farmers.
  1. NB suggests that succession planning would be helpful. MB recommends the succession planning workshop through Land for Good.
  2. NB suggests dividing the grant list and adding more descriptions to help people figure out if they qualify.
  3. Carleigh says that Jessica Camp from MDAR has offered to host a more in depth "beginning farmer resource" workshop.
  4. MB suggests that Berkshire Ag ventures, Farm Credit East, and NRCS, and FSA could also present at the workshop.
  5. [Jessica.camp@state.ma.us](mailto:Jessica.camp@state.ma.us). SM to contact about hosting this event.
- iv. NB asks if the Ag committee can assist in helping farms to find employees?
  1. Maybe an online area to post job opportunities.
4. Announcements and good of the order.
  - a. North Adams Farmers Market Starting June 3, 9 am - 1 pm
  - b. Full Well Farm farmstand opening on weekends Saturday, Sunday 9 am - 5 pm
  - c. Chenail Crofts booking picnics for the summer, add ons with other local vendors available
  - d. MA local sheep and wool craft fair in Cummington Fair Grounds this weekend, May 27-28.
  - e. Carleigh asks about how to be featured on the signs that list "Things to do in Adams"
    - i. Joe and Becky mention that they believe that the events committee is behind the sign and that they should be contacted about featuring Chenail Crofts.
  - f. Joe Novak suggests asking Ashley Randall, new Agricultural Commissioner, to come out to Adams and tour farms in Adams.
5. Next meeting tentatively for July 18, 2023, 7 pm or July 25th.
6. Motion to adjourn by CS at 8:10 pm
  - a. Seconded by LS. Unanimously approved.