

Adams Agricultural Commission

Meeting Minutes

January 23, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Adams Town Hall

8 Park Street, Adams, MA 01220

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C. FRK

In attendance: Meg Bantle (MB), Sonia McWhirt (SM), Loren Steins (LS), Christina Satko (CS).

In audience: Coby Tarjick, from Community Development

Absent: Natasha Bordeaux (NB)

Also present:

1. Call to order 7:05 pm
2. Old Business
  - a. LS motion to approve the minutes from September 19th. MB seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.
  - b. Information and updates
    - i. Exploring the Small Farm Dream has started - applications still accepted on a rolling basis.
    - ii. Succession school in Pittsfield Wednesday, January 31, Feb 28th and March 27th, 9:30-3:30 at the Pittsfield Library.
    - iii. Added to the list of resources for new farmers: FSA and NRCS and contact information.
    - iv. Motion to replace the Natural Disaster Recovery link with a link to the Resources for New Farmers list on our web page submitted by SM seconded by MB.
      1. MB suggests adding Berkshire Agricultural Ventures to the New Farmer Resource list because they offer the lowest interest rates for loans in the region at 3%.
3. New Business
  - a. Recent workshop reports.
    - i. "Nuts and Bolts of Farm Leasing": there are resources out there through Land for Good, the Carrot Project, and other agencies to help write leases. There are pros and cons to leases. Berkshire Natural Resources Council identified trends in the Berkshires: lack of housing, expensive land, an older generation with no succession plans. Accountants, legal representation, and others may all offer different perspectives on leasing.
      1. Francesca Gallow, attorney from Legal food Hub will match agricultural businesses with legal help pro-bono. Apply through [www.legalfoodhub.org](http://www.legalfoodhub.org)

- ii. “Are you Grant Ready?”: tailored to dairy farmers but helpful. Make sure you are a good fit for the grant, make sure you are eligible. Is the grant compatible with your business plans and priorities? What are the goals of the grant? Three waves of work: Application, record keeping requirements, final reporting or output requirements. Start early to gather all of the application materials. Look at previously funded projects and evaluation criteria.

#### 4. Announcements and Good of the Order

- a. Grants open now
  - i. Local Farmer Award through the Grinspoon Foundation open until January 31st
  - ii. MDAR Resilient Food Structure Infrastructure Grant Friday, open until March 29, 2024 by 4:00pm
  - iii. February 14 - Transition to Organic Partnership Program: Fundamentals of Fertility Management - N. Grafton. [Details here.](#)
- b. Berkshire Grown winter workshops
  - i. Incorporating Perennials on your Farm, Date & Time: Thursday, January 25th from 10 AM-12PM
  - ii. SNAP/HIP-Best Practices Tuesday, February 27, 6-7:30PM
  - iii. Grant Writing - How to read and interpret grant applications! (A TWO-PART WORKSHOP, ONLINE).
    - 1. Dates & Times:
      - Session 1 - Wednesday, February 21
      - Session 2 - Wednesday, March 6
  - iv. Labor Movement with Cynthia Flores (IN PERSON)
    - 1. Date & Time: Wednesday, April 10th from 1 to 3 PM
- c. Pioneer Valley Regional Agricultural Conference February 3rd at Smith Vocational and Agricultural School 9 am-12 pm
- d. Berkshire Agricultural Ventures - Wholesale Readiness, program for food entrepreneurs - January 12th and May 17th
- e. April 3 is agriculture day at the Mass state house
- f. New members in Community Development, Program Manager, Coby Tarjick and Administrative Assistant [Kyomi Belanger](#)

#### 5. Next Agricultural Commission meeting

- a. Aim for February 20th at 7 pm or 27th at 7 pm.

#### 6. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn LS, CS seconded, all approved 7:42 pm.