

Colchester Agriculture Commission Minutes
Monday, May 20, 2019, 7:00 P.M.
Town Hall Room 2

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COLCHESTER
2019 MAY 21 PM 12:35

Attending: Chris Bourque (Chairman), David Wasniewski, Leslie Curtis (Alternate)
and also Stan Soby (Board of Selectmen Liaison)

Absent: Donna Rosenblatt

Also Attending: Gigi Liverant Rosemary Nutt and Morgan Bingham

Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order by Chairman C.Bourque at 7:10 P.M.

1. Approve minutes of the Agriculture Commission on April 15, 2019:

There ended up not being a quorum at this scheduled meeting so there was no meeting and therefore no minutes to approve.

2. Additions and/or changes to Agenda:

None.

3. Farm Guide Planning:

The idea of publishing a brochure to publicize the location of farms in Colchester which have products that they would like to sell on their farms and raising community awareness of these locavore options was discussed at length.

A spreadsheet prepared by Katherine Kosiba of the Colchester Garden Cub contains contact information for farmers in our town who are currently on our radar. Leslie Curtis volunteered to contact all these farmers to poll them on whether (or not) and how they would like to have their farms publicized in some comprehensive document that would guide the citizenry to their farms.

Stan Soby suggested that the selectman's office and various civic organizations in town might be able to help identify other farms who are currently not on this spreadsheet by email blasts to their members mailing lists. Chris Bourque suggested that we might apply for a CT Department of Agriculture grant to pay for cost of production of an eventual map or brochure. Gigi Liverant said that she would be willing to help with the design of such a document. It was also noted that an overlay of local farms on the Town's GIS maps might be feasible.

When it became clear that there were still many unknowns with making this concept a reality, Chairman Bourque suggested that we form a sub-committee to study this and come back to the next meeting with specific recommendations. Gigi Liverant, Morgan Bingham, Rosemary Nutt and Leslie Curtis volunteered (and suggested that Katherine Kosiba also be included in this planning meeting) and the first meeting of this sub-committee will meet on Monday, June 10 at 6:00 at 110 Cato Corner Road.

4. Farm to School Planning:

Chairman Chris Bourque reported that he had met with Jeffrey Burt, the Superintendent of Schools, about the idea of integrating agricultural education into the curriculum of Colchester public schools in an inter-disciplinary way from pre-K thru graduation. The concept took a further step forward when Mr. Bourque subsequently met with Charles Hughes, the Director of Curriculum for Colchester schools.

This concept was well received by Mr. Hughes and later this summer there will be a meeting of Mr. Bourque, Mr. Hughes, and a representative from the Connecticut Agricultural Education Council whose specialty is this topic. They will bring input about what is working well in other communities in our state and work with the Curriculum Director to implement some of the ideas here into the curriculum of our Colchester schools.

5. Citizen Comments:

Chris Bourque reported that currently he is not aware of contentious issues between the farming community and the town government. Over the past few years, adjustments to correct some oversights (or unintended consequences) in the Town's agricultural zoning ordinances have been officially incorporated into the P&Z's regulations thanks in large part to effective advocacy by Daphne Schaub, the Assistant Town Planner.

Dave Wasniewski reported that the Colchester Farm toSchool Council has a Facebook Page website with lots of information on this topic.

8. Adjournment:

Leslie Curtis moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 P.M. and David Wasniewski seconded.

Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Curtis
Recording Secretary at this Meeting and
Alternate on the Agriculture Commission