

Town of Lincoln
Minutes of the Agriculture Commission Meeting
Held on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 via Zoom teleconference

Members Present:

Voting: Louise Bergeron (co-chair), Nancy Bergen, Lynne Bower
Alternate Voting: Corey Nimmer, Karen Seo

Members Absent:

Voting: Ari Kurtz (co-chair), Ellen Raja

Visitors:

Sherry Haydock
Linda Emanuel

7:35 pm – Meeting commenced

Minutes

Minutes for 1/11/2022 – deferred review to next meeting.

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item** –Karen to discuss with Louise the questions in the minutes needing answers

Informing prospective buyers of Lincoln property about Right to Farm (RTF) bylaw

Two weeks ago, Dan Pereira (Asst. Town Administrator) contacted Louise and offered to add an article for Town Meeting re: requiring prospective buyers to sign a document, prior to signing a P&S agreement, confirming their awareness of Lincoln's Right to Farm (RTF) bylaw. This requirement would be incorporated into the bylaw. Based on Ag Comm feedback, there needs to be more discussion about aspects such as enforcement, who will provide the buyers with the form, where will the signed form be kept, what happens if the buyers refuse to sign. Weston has such a policy. How did they implement it? It was proposed to work towards having an article for 2023 Town Meeting.

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item** – Lynne to contact Weston and find out details of their approach to ensure prospective buyers of real estate are aware of the town's Right to Farm bylaw -- ow did they get this approved, the details of the policy (forms, record keeping, enforcement, etc.) what has been their experience so far, etc.

Updating the Ag Comm farm brochure

It was agreed that for now, the focus will be on creating a digital list that can be easily printed out, distributed, and posted on the web site. This would be easier to update, less costly to produce, etc. than the paper brochure.

Just prior to this meeting, Karen distributed a spreadsheet with the contact information for the Lincoln farms that are either in the current brochure, license land from Lincoln/Conservation Dept for farming, or have otherwise been identified by Ag Comm

members as farms. She also included proposed next steps to (a) draft messages for these farms asking if they want to be included in a list of Lincoln farms that will be posted on the Ag Comm website and distributed via email, hardcopy, etc. and asking for key farm information (name, location, contact info, products/services, etc.), (b) draft a message for general release seeking other farms not on this list that would like to be included (c) sending the messages (d) designing the list with pictures, etc. so that it can be a good marketing tool.

A subcommittee of Louise, Sherry and Karen was formed.

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item --** Karen and Sherry to draft a message asking if the farmer wants to be included in a list of Lincoln farms that will be posted on the Ag Comm website and distributed via email, hardcopy, etc. and asking for key farm information (name, location, contact info, products/services, etc.)

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item --** Karen and Sherry to draft a message for general release seeking other farms besides the known ones that would like to be included on a list of Lincoln farms

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item --** Karen and Sherry to send the above messages, collect the answers and deliver them to Louise for final formatting.

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item --** Louise to provide formatting, pictures, etc. for the digital list of Lincoln farms.

Other updates

Annual report -- The Ag Comm annual report was submitted to the town.

Agriculture-related videos -- Corey reported that there was lots of good footage of shearing and that putting together a short video should be straight forward if no voice over was needed. It was agreed that something showing the overall process would be good. A video on maple sugaring would be good too.

Drumlin Farm -- There is a new Drumlin director Scott McCue. Louise has met him and he is likely to be the new Drumlin contact for the Ag Comm.

2/15 6-8pm "Kiss the Ground" film & speakers – sponsored by Healthy Soils/Livable Future working group that includes members of Codman Community Farms, the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust, and Mothers Out Front. Free. Registration required. Participants will receive a link to watch the film 72 hrs before the panel. The film will also be screened at 6pm on February 15th. The expert panel will begin promptly at 7pm. To register see: <https://lincolnconservation.org/events/kiss-the-ground-film-screening-and-expert-panel>

Light pollution – LLCT hosted a great talk re: light pollution. Every living thing needs some amount of time when it's dark. Light pollution impacts agriculture, e.g., even daytime pollinators need dark. A link to a recording of the talk is available at: <https://lincolnconservation.org/program-recording-january-2022-light-pollution/>

Access to Codman farm equipment -- Sherry has been trying to reach Codman staff re: sharing equipment with other Lincoln farms. Would they be willing to let non-Codman staff use it? If only Codman staff/volunteers could use it, do they have time? Would the equipment be available when other farms need it? Etc.

Jumping worm conference – [Some of this is from the conference slides that Karen saw, not from the Ag Comm meeting]. UMass held a conference on jumping worms on Jan 26-27. Topics covered included anatomy, life cycle, how this and other invasive species were introduced into New England (no native ones left due to Laurentide Ice Sheet), ecological niche of different species, how the ecological niche determines the impact of the worm on the soil, identifying snake worms (vs other earthworm species), etc. There are many species of earth worms and the most common ones came from Europe and are generally considered beneficial or at least neutral. Therefore, there are no chemicals or products for controlling them. Asia has many species of jumping worms. There are 3 species here of jumping worm. They are relatively large, abundant, voracious, fast moving (for an earth worm) and reproduce fast. They die in cold, but their eggs survive winter. They alter the soil structure more severely than the European worms, reducing its support for plants. Depending on soil levels, worms bio-accumulate cadmium, lead and mercury – so the worms could be toxic to birds

There was little offered for controlling them:

1. Chemicals:
 - Saponin – irritates/destroys earthworm mucus, used since early 1900s on golf courses, e.g., mowrah meal. Have to water it in. Toxic to fish.
 - DDT and chlorinated hydrocarbons (chlordane) used in 1950s-1960s – too toxic, didn't break down
 - 2008 saponins again. A tea seed extract from Chinese tea oil plant was used in Early Bird fertilizer. Effectiveness varies depending on worm species, soil conditions, etc. No longer produced.
 - Toxicity assay levels (for European earthworms) indicated that mustard and diatomaceous earth had minimal effect in terms of killing the worms. Early Bird products obtained while still available were 100% lethal.
2. Heat
 - 104F for 3 days kills worms and cocoons
 - Composting might reach needed temperatures for long enough
 - Solarization might work for bare dirt but not for turf or pasture
 - In black bags, if the air temperature is high enough (89 F?), after 3 hrs 50% dead, after 24 hours 100% dead

Research on jumping worms is ongoing at Univ. Minnesota, Univ Wisconsin, and other places.

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item** – Karen to distribute pointers to info re: jumping worms. Inconsistent results

Ag Comm web site review – not done yet

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item** – All to look at the Ag Comm web site and provide feedback to Louise.

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item** – Louise to ask Ari to put Ag Com web site review on the agenda for the next meeting.

List of Lincoln/Massachusetts plants that are poisonous to farm animals/poultry

This was to be posted on the Ag Comm web site. We began accumulating this info but did not find anything both comprehensive and specific to Massachusetts. The lists that were found have not been posted yet.

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item** -- Karen to ask Mass Farm Bureau if they have a list of poisonous plants in Massachusetts

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item** -- Karen to resend to everyone the lists (of poison plants) that were found last year.

Orientation package for new Ag Comm members – In January, Lynn sent 4 messages containing documents/etc. that could go into an orientation package for new members of the Ag Comm.

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item** -- Karen to forward Lynne's 4 messages sent on 1/9/2022 containing orientation materials for new members of the Ag Comm

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item** – All to review Lynne's 4 messages sent on 1/9/2022 containing orientation materials for new members of the Ag Comm

Community engagement – We need to increase awareness of the Ag Comm website and its resources and generate interest in and support for farming. Sherry suggested a once a month posting of farming-relevant info with a link to the Ag Comm website for more info, e.g., time to prune, time to order seeds, time to start new chicks, etc. This message could be sent to LincolnTalk, Lincoln Squirrel, LLCT, Codman community, Lincoln Garden Club, etc. Similarly, updates to existing information and addition of new content to the web site could create notifications to be sent.

**** 2/8/2022 Action Item** – All to suggest ideas for once a month farming-related postings and where available pointers to relevant content on the Ag Comm web site or elsewhere.

Farm Bureau membership

Ari was going to send the names of Ag Comm members to the Mass Farm Bureau.

9:35pm – Meeting adjourned.