

Town of Lincoln
Minutes of the Agriculture Commission Meeting
Held on Tuesday, June 13, 2023 via Zoom teleconference

Members Present:

Voting: Louise Bergeron (co-chair), Ari Kurtz (co-chair), Nancy Bergen, Karen Seo

Members Absent:

Voting: Ellen Raja

Alternate Voting: Sherry Haydock, Linda Emanuel

Visitor

Bill Huss

7:30pm – Meeting commenced – Louise chairing

Approval of minutes

3/14/2023 minutes – Approved unanimously – subject to requested change

5/13/2023 minutes – Approved unanimously

Guest – Bill Huss

Bill Huss works in the area of energy conservation, teaches at Babson, volunteers for non-profits, and raises alpacas.

Introduction of AgCom members:

- Ari Kurtz – CSA ended in 2022. Still growing crops, selling pickup amounts, donating to Field of Greens
- Louise Bergeron – works in Biotech, raises produce, has chickens
- Nancy Bergen – raises corn, makes maple syrup,
- Karen Seo – working on establishing Ouessant sheep in the U.S.

Vote: The Ag Comm voted unanimously to invite Bill Huss to join the Ag Comm

6/13/2023 Action – Louise to take steps required to add Bill Huss to the Ag Comm – obtain his bio, obtain Select board's approval.

Farm to pantry grant and budget: update and actions

We need to put together an updated budget and write articles on the farm-to-food-pantry grant program for newsletter. We should interview Boyce, participating farmers, clients of the pantry, the CoA. The resulting article(s) could go in the next farm newsletter in September.

The process/forms for the grant application need to be simplified. Only Drumlin filled it out in detail. Louise had to spend a *LOT* of time talking with the farmers to figure things out. The cases where there is a known single product (e.g., Kanner – apples, Silvestro – eggs) was relatively simple. She said that she ended up just talking with folks, creating an invoice template and having folks fill that out. The invoice is the thing that says what is being delivered for how much money but has less detail in terms of dates and the exact kind of produce. This is what secures the funds

from the town for the farmer. And there will still be a contract, maybe simplified too. At the end of the season, someone with market expertise will need to compare Karen Boyce's records of what was actually delivered to the amounts the farm said they delivered and verify that the value of what was delivered matches the amount granted.

How do we weigh the benefit of the food to the Food Pantry vs the benefit of the grant to the farmers? The Ag Comm will be talking to the farmers about the results of the program last year and also to those participating in this year's program.

Farm Newsletter: Plans for summer issue

There was lots of positive feedback for the spring issue. Many people sent email asking to be sent the next newsletter. We need to pull out the email addresses from these messages.

6/13/2023 Action – Karen to extract email addresses from requests (for next newsletter) sent to Ag Comm mailbox.

Future issues of the newsletter will be distributed as follows:

- by email as requested
- 10 to Town Hall
- 90 for places such as the library, Lincoln café, real-estate offices, farmers market

Livestock inspection

Michelle spoke with animal control officer (Jennifer Condon). Jen wants to find out about livestock in town about which she is not aware so she can inspect them. The AgComm discussed how the town/Ag Comm might create a mechanism to collect information on the livestock in town. With dogs, there is a requirement to license them and a notification sent to inform/remind residents of this. A request for livestock information could be piggybacked on the notification sent re: dog licenses. The request would ask people to send email to the AgComm mailbox with name, address and list of livestock.

6/13/2023 Action – Louise to write up our proposed approach for gathering information on Lincoln livestock and see if Michelle approves.

Establishment of "FarmTalk" via Slack: Review and decision to invite farmers to join

Discussed use of Slack for a "FarmTalk" for Ag Comm members and maybe other Lincoln folks who want to talk about farming-related topics:

- Running something like LincolnTalk involves an administrative burden. Google and Slack are two options
- Should we launch FarmTalk? What would this accomplish? It could be useful as a community resource. Should we invite local farmers to join?
- Someone would need to provide some simple coaching on how to join and use Slack

This was put on hold.

Meeting ended around 9 to 9:30 pm.