

Town of Lincoln
Minutes of the Agriculture Commission Meeting
Held on Tuesday, March 14, 2023 via Zoom teleconference

Members Present:

Voting: Louise Bergeron (co-chair), Ari Kurtz (co-chair), Nancy Bergen
Alternate Voting: Sherry Haydock, Linda Emanuel, Karen Seo

Members Absent:

Voting: Ellen Raja, Lynne Bower

7:40pm – Meeting commenced – Louise chairing

Approval of minutes

2/14/2023 minutes – approved unanimously subject to edits sent by Louise and Sherry

Ag Comm Newsletter

Draft sections have been written by Louise (backyard farms), Nancy (maple sugaring), and Ari (CSAs). Sherry has taken pictures for the newsletter (sheep, pigs, chickens, seedlings, etc.).

3/14/2023 Action Item – Louise to send to the Ag Comm members a compilation of Newsletter sections to everybody –commercial farming, backyard farms, maple sugaring, CSAs, baby animals.

3/14/2023 Action Item – All to review newsletter draft.

3/14/2023 Action Item – Karen to write newsletter section on commercial farming in Lincoln.

3/14/2023 Action Item – Karen to ask Corey Nimmer about total acreage in Lincoln used for farming.

4/10/2023 is the target date for producing a formatted draft of the newsletter.

Promoting Lincoln Agriculture – Town Hall display, Ag Comm website, updated brochure

3/14/2023 Action Item – Louise to put together an article and pictures on backyard farming for Stacy Carter (Conservation Dept) for the Town Hall display on agriculture in Lincoln. She will send it the Ag Comm for review first.

3/14/2023 Action Item – Karen to contact Stacy Carter re: status of her efforts to gather info on Lincoln's farms.

3/14/2023 Action Item – Karen to ask Stacy to send a draft of the updated Lincoln farm brochure that she's putting together to the Ag Comm.

Hydrologist talks

The community needs to conserve well water. Some wells went dry in 2022. The aquifers that supply wells are a shared resource but well water usage is not regulated by the town/state/etc. The Ag Comm is collaborating with the LLCT and Water Commission to sponsor hydrologist talks.

Dates are not final yet. Current plan is to have 3 different sessions -- one in April (health of aquifers), one in the summer, and one in the fall. The LLCT and Water Department are hiring the speakers and will cover the costs. The Ag Comm will assist with publicity.

Farm to Food Pantry program

Ari talked to Pete Foley (Codman Farms) and Mohammed (Hannan Agro Farms) about how things went last year with regard to the farm-to-food-pantry program. Pete and Mohammed are interested in participating again. He also talked to Silvia Levine (Drumlin) and Rob (Food Project). They both took on their positions after the farm-to-food-pantry program ended. Nancy Bergen (Matlock Farm) said the funding was helpful.

3/14/2023 Action Item – Ari to contact Kanner (Kanner Family Orchards) for feedback on the Farm to Food Pantry program in 2022.

The Ag Comm agreed that subject to other demands on this year's budget, the farm-to-food-pantry program should be continued. We need to update the farm-to-food-pantry grant application to include a requirement for keeping records and sending that information to the Ag Comm.

3/14/2023 Action Item – Karen to update the farm-to-food-pantry grant application to include a requirement for keeping records and sending that information to the Ag Comm. She will send the updated form to the Ag Comm for review.

3/14/2023 Action Item – Ari to find out the Ag Comm budget for 2023-2024

Other

Ari hosted a meeting in his barn of local farmers and others -- Silvia Levine (Drumlin), Steve Verrill (Verrill Farm), Pete Foley et al. (Codman Farms), Nancy Bergen and Ephraim Flint (Matlock Farm), Rob (Food Project), Mohammed (Hannan Agro), Emily Haslett (Common Ground), Jim Henderson, Louise Bergeron. The goal was to offer folks a chance to get to know each other and to do some brainstorming. The farmers were very interested in having some kind of inter-farm communications channel (e.g., list serv, slack) that would facilitate things such as group purchases.

8:45pm-- Meeting ended