



City of Keene
New
Hampshire

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION AGENDA

Wednesday, November 13, 2019

3:30 PM

2nd Floor Committee Room

Commission Members

Mark Florenz, Vice Chair
Councilor Bettina A. Chadbourne
Aaron Moody
Charles Daloz
Kira Wadsworth
Allen Raymond

Staff

Rhett Lamb, Com. Dev. Dir./
Assistant City Manager

1. Call to order
2. Approve August 14, 2019 minutes
3. Annual review of projects and goals
4. New business
5. Next Meeting – Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at 3:30PM
6. Adjournment

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AGRICULTURE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 9, 2019

5:00 PM

2nd Floor Committee Rm

Members Present:

Charles Daloz
Allen Raymond
Kira Wadsworth
Mark Florenz, Vice Chair

Staff Present:

Members Not Present:

Catherine (Kit) Souther, Chair
Councilor Bettina A. Chadbourne
Aaron Moody

1. Call to Order

Mr. Florenz called the meeting to order at 3:40 PM.

2. Approve August 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Raymond made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of August 14, 2019. Ms. Wadsworth seconded the motion.

Mr. Raymond noted a correction: the last large paragraph says that the Monadnock Food Coop is “in partnership” with the library’s seed exchange, but they are not. He continued that the Coop donated seeds.

Mr. Daloz inquired about the overall style and formatting of meeting minutes. Mr. Raymond suggested he talk with the commission’s staff liaison about that. The minute-taker encouraged Mr. Daloz to reach out to the City Clerk’s Office with any questions or feedback.

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Annual Review of Projects and Goals

Mr. Florenz stated that the commission did not meet in September and he was not at the August meeting, so he does not know where the group left off with this.

Mr. Raymond replied that the group had been talking about threats and opportunities at the last meeting. He continued that Chair Souther gave specific assignments to members. There were things people were going to research more.

Mr. Florenz asked if they should table this topic. Mr. Raymond stated that Councilor Chadbourne was supposed to follow up with people. He continued that Aaron Moody also had assignments but he cannot remember what they were. He himself raised the question about threats, and talked about ways in which companies are labeling food packages in ways that could make it harder to identify GMOs.

Mr. Daloz stated that he does not know all of the projects the commission is involved in, but he would be interested in the list. He asked, don’t they need the list soon? Isn’t Chair Souther soon

presenting an update on the commission's activities to the City Council? Discussion ensued about the City Council presentation and what the commission has and has not done.

Mr. Florenz stated that his question is more about going forward, and making sure commission members are all on board with what the priorities are and our goals are for the coming year. He continued that for example, they have been talking on and off about pollinator habitat, and utilizing City-owned properties.

Mr. Daloz asked what happened to the commission's brochure. Mr. Florenz replied that it is 95% done. He continued that it is more a procedural question of how to finish it and where does it go. Brief discussion ensued.

Ms. Wadsworth stated that there was also talk about starting a Facebook page. Mr. Raymond replied that that might be what Councilor Chadbourne was looking into – whether the commission could have its own page, or if it has to be part of the Community Development Department, and who the commission should contact if they want the City to promote certain things. Discussion ensued. Mr. Florenz stated that the general question is: how can they better publicize events happening in the city that are relevant, using the City's existing communication tools? Mr. Raymond stated that he thinks Mr. Moody was going to follow up about Bent Court usage and what that is about.

Mr. Florenz stated that it sounds like there are three main projects or goals that they want to explore: pollinator habitat, social media, and open spaces/Bent Court/City-owned spaces. Mr. Raymond stated that the brochure is tied in with the social media goal.

Mr. Florenz stated that they really need Councilor Chadbourne and Chair Souther here for details about this, so they should table it until next month. Brief discussion ensued about Bent Court. Mr. Raymond agreed with Mr. Florenz's listing of the three big goals, and stated that when they have the full group here, they can look at how to break those into action plans so they are achievable, and who will take the lead on what. Mr. Daloz agreed and encouraged the group to bring their thoughts to the next meeting. Mr. Florenz stated that each project/goal could be an agenda item at each meeting so they could discuss the status of each, if everyone agrees what the goals are, keeping in mind that the goals are open to revision. Mr. Raymond and Ms. Wadsworth agreed.

Mr. Florenz asked where they are at regarding pollinator habitat, and who was heading that up. Mr. Daloz replied that to create a pollinator garden at Bent Court would seem to require tilling the entire area. Mr. Florenz replied that there are other ways of encouraging pollinators that are less time-consuming, like mowing schedules. Discussion ensued about methods for encouraging pollinators, including Mr. Moody's suggestion of using cows for mowing. Mr. Raymond stated that SMART goals are helpful – goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. He continued that cows would not be realistic at the moment. They could look at something the commission could accomplish, such as: how to get the community to support pollinator habitat, and how to get a basic brochure out. Discussion continued. Mr. Daloz spoke about the pollinator garden run by the Friends of Open Spaces, at the community gardens out beyond the bowling alley. He continued that it is theoretically open to anyone. Mr. Florenz stated that he feels like encouraging pollinator habitat fits within their mission. He continued that there are lots of ways to do that, and they can discuss it more at the next meeting. Sometimes things get lost if there is not clarity about who is driving it and what the next steps

are. Ms. Wadsworth replied that she would love to research what already exists and what the options are.

Mr. Florenz asked what Mr. Daloz's other proposals are. Mr. Daloz replied that his project could be getting people to help with the not-well-utilized community gardens project that is administered by Parks & Recreation Director Andrew Bohannon. He continued that there are other gardens in the community to consider, and gave examples of locations. He spoke about encouraging people's use of such gardens/spaces. Mr. Florenz suggested that what Mr. Daloz is talking about fits in with the goal of better utilizing City-owned spaces. Mr. Daloz agreed. Mr. Raymond stated that they need to identify the City-owned properties that are not developed or utilized, and that are accessible, and see what they can do with those green spaces. Mr. Florenz replied that two or three years ago the commission did a mapping project. Mr. Daloz replied yes, of "potential community garden sites." He continued that that should be available somewhere in the group's archives. Discussion continued.

Mr. Daloz stated that the Keene Farmer's Market is another topic. He continued that anything the commission can figure out that makes the farmer's market better is probably going to be good. He continued that this topic simmers on the back burner and he does not know if the commission has ever solved anything. Mr. Florenz stated that long term, it would be great for the farmer's market to be in a better, stable, long-term location. He continued that it is to the commission's benefit to stay in touch with the farmer's market and help them communicate with the City. This does not need to be a huge project for the commission. The farmer's market goes before the City Council every year and talks about parking meters. Maybe the commission could somehow make that conversation easier. They could reach out again and see if there are coordinators from the farmer's market who want to talk with the commission. Discussion continued about the farmer's market, its vendors, its location, its relation and relevancy to the commission, how involved the commission should be and in what way, the Gilbo Avenue project, and so on and so forth.

Mr. Florenz stated that it would be helpful to have someone be a point person for these things. He continued that at their next meeting, it would be good to identify a point person. The point person could reach out to farmer's market folks and whoever is driving the Gilbo Avenue project, work to better understand the farmer's market's relationship with the City Council regarding parking meters, etc., and try to come up with some projects for this coming year. Ms. Wadsworth replied that she is very curious about the Gilbo Avenue project, and could reach out to someone about that. Mr. Florenz replied that he has a good relationship with some of the farmer's market people, so he could reach out to them and see where they are at this point.

Mr. Florenz stated that the question is how the commission can support the farmer's market. Mr. Daloz replied yes, their overall message is "Let's maintain a good relationship with you; we're glad you're here."

4. New Business

None.

5. Next Meeting – Wednesday, November 13, 2019

Mr. Raymond spoke about how the presentation to the City Council should show the City Council how the commission is moving forward. He stated that yes, they have had struggles, but

they are moving forward – it would be good to focus the presentation 60% on the future and 40% on the past. Brief discussion ensued.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker