

Not Approved

Meeting Minutes

Agricultural Commission

May 2, 2024

Pelham Police Community Room

14 Village Green, Pelham, NH

Called to Order 6:33 PM

In Attendance:

Danielle Masse-Quinn, Vice- Chair

Steve Doherty, Secretary

Charlene Takesian, Board of Selectman Representative

Michelle Cooke, Secretary

James Fisher, Member

Absent: Jenny Larson

Pledge of Allegiance

Danielle will Chair the meeting with Jenny being absent.

Meeting Minutes Review of March 7, 2024

(Cooke/Doherty) accepted 4-0-0

Announcements: none

Open Forum: none

Appointments: none

Discussion:

Composting Program Update:

Michelle went to speak with Superintendent McGee on March 18, 2024. Rhonda Whittier set up a representative from Vanguard, James Wojcik to attend the meeting. James is the Organics Account Manager. James explained the process of Anaerobic Digestion and how it works. The process begins with the collection of recyclable materials of inedible /unsellable foods. The waste gets combined with manure and put in biodigester tanks. Microorganisms digest the waste converting into biogas. This is

converted into renewable energy. The waste is then converted into liquid fertilizer for the farmers and dry bedding products for the cows.

Superintendent McGee was still interested in this process but needs to see how to make it work with the costs. I asked if we could do a trial and he said that he would want to only do if he could commit to this effort continuing. He suggested to revisit once I could show solid numbers.

Michelle went and met with Rhonda at the Transfer Station on March 25, 2024. Rhonda showed the contract with K-Town Disposal. When looking at the amounts being paid, if we remove one 10 yard dumpster we would be the same price for 2 containers from Vanguard. Michelle will be following up with Superintendent McGee to see if he wants to commit to the switch in removal process.

Michelle spoke with Rhonda on May 2, 2024 and to date 2,600 pounds / 1.3 tons of materials have been removed and sent to be converted into renewable energy and not to a landfill. (March 675 pounds and April 820 pounds)

Rhonda will send Selectman Takesian monthly reports to share at the Selectman's Meetings. It is important to show that this effort is working in reducing what is being sent out. This is making an impact.

Chestnut Tree Update:

James will be attending the Annual Meeting for the American Chestnut Foundation on May 11, 2024. He will be receiving seeds from the foundation next year. He will be going to see how we can best restore the Chestnut Tree to the area. He will also be receiving seeds from a local farmer who has been successful in maintaining healthy Chestnut trees. While at the meeting he hopes to see how to best select which hybrid crosses may be best to combat against the blight causing the trees to die.

We will follow up with possible locations to plant after his meeting which will include review of science and field work plans presented.

Selectman Takesian suggested we have a Chestnut themed tree for the Festival of Trees this year to promote the efforts of the commission. All agreed that would be a great idea. More discussion will follow about this idea.

2024 Farmers Market Update

Vendor applications are found on Facebook page Pelham NH Farmers Market. Vendors have been filling out applications. We have 10 vendors at this time, with more regular vendors following up. Danielle said that she and Jenny would follow up with the applications. Joe Boisenault will also be assisting in the application reviews. Steve has set up insurance to begin the end of May for a 1-year period. He will bring receipt to present for reimbursement at the next meeting. Steve also has signs to be placed to show the market reminders. Cathy Duffy has reached out to Pelham High looking for volunteers to help with set up on Saturday mornings. Spread sheet of vendors from Cathy shared. Danielle shared the flyer for the

market placed in the Evergreen. Danielle also shared the agritourism section that will be in the Master Plan. Members agree to be at the market to prepare for opening day.

Community Garden:

Discussion on the questionnaire for community garden. This will be placed on the website for people to fill out and Danielle suggested have at the Farmers Market for people to fill out as well. Danielle said she or Jenny would be able to pick up responses from the Selectman's office. Members agreed for the need to do a survey to see if interest still exists.

Review of sites visited. Minutes from August 3,2023 were reviewed. Members still feel best viable option for a community garden would be at Merriam Farms. Discussion on size of garden.

Danielle made a motion: Decrease the original idea presented for a two -acre section of Merriam Farm to a one- acre section. (Steve/James) 4-0-0 vote

Committee agreed to table further discussion until we collect data from questionnaire. We discuss again at next meeting.

Motion to adjourn: (Steve/James) 8:15

Respectfully Submitted

Michelle Cooke

Secretary Agricultural Committee