

Harvard Agricultural Advisory Commission (HAAC)

Town of Harvard, MA

Minutes of Meeting May 26, 2021

Approved December 15, 2021

Members Present: Kerri Green - chair, Rob Traver, Christiane Turnheim, Frank Carlson (was in and out with connection issues)

7:05pm Green called the meeting to order.

Green apologized for not catching up on minutes, and would have them ready for next time.

Harvard Grown Brochure

Green screenshared the Harvard Grown Brochure and quickly ran through what changes have been made.

- Green requested an updated bio description from Carlson,
- General Store - Green is requesting a less covid specific bio from Scott Hayward for the General Store.
- Community Harvest Project & Fruitlands Museum have provided a logo, photo and bio description.
- Harvard Grown block directing to the website where other farms and producers not open to the public are listed.

Discussion about an opening in the brochure and what to put in it's place. Traver suggested a scenic landscape. Turnheim suggested locations of egg sales. Green though perhaps the Harvard Conservation Trails website. Green said she would play around with some options.

Outside of the brochure was reviewed and Green requested more images for variety. Turnheim offered to send images, and remembered she still needs to send her logo. Members agreed to stick with the 8 images vs adding more.

Green will finish up the last changes and will approve at the next meeting to order before FY21 ends.

Community Resilience Working Group & DLTA Grant Update

Turnheim reported that Chris Ryan forwarded her the submitted District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) grant application to address the issue that there is no staff available for Ag. Comm. What has been approved is a staffing study for Ag. Comm. Members originally thought the grant request was for staffing assistance, and are a little underwhelmed by the idea of another study.

Turnheim read aloud the scope that was included in the application that was submitted and approved to help the Commission better understand the project scope that was requested.

“Agriculture Staffing Study – The Montachusett region as well as the entirety of Central Massachusetts, has a long tradition of agriculture as an important part of the economic base and cultural identity. As of 2016, as noted by the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce, agriculture remains a key economic driver in the region with a legacy of apple orchards and newer technologies exemplified by Little Leaf Farms in Devens, the region continues to be an agricultural center of the state. However, individual farms and entire agricultural sectors and communities struggle with challenges such as taxation, regulatory burdens, as well as newer issues such as climate change and the global economy. Through this project, the agricultural community in the Town of Harvard, led by the municipal standing committee, the Agricultural Advisory Commission, will determine options for funding an advisory and administrative position that will assist the Commission in carrying out the goals and objectives of the agricultural community, including a range of actions recommended in a recently completed Agricultural Climate Action Plan. While many towns have such commissions, very few have either part- or full-time staff to help volunteers carry out their mission. Finding a range of potential solutions to this problem could be applied elsewhere.”

There will be an upcoming “kickoff” meeting with Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) who will be hired to complete the study. Chris Ryan has sent out a doodle poll for a meeting date, yet to be determined. Green will reach out to Ryan to get more info as to what MRPC will be seeking as far as information goes.

Harvard Grown Website Content

Green proposed a google calendar to create a posting schedule. A post every other week, which would rotate. Members agreed. Green would send out a schedule.

Member Updates

Traver mentioned speaking with Wendell Willard about Ag. Comm. and proposed the idea of him re-volunteering Ag. Comm. He didn’t feel as though he turned the idea down, and he would reach back out to him. Discussion about what agricultural niches might be helpful to have on the Commission. With

McGovern not renewing an equine member would be helpful. Horticultural and homesteading were also discussed. Possible posting on Nextdoor was also discussed. Green encouraged members to talk with residents/neighbors in Ag. who might be potential candidates to serve on the Commission.

Green reminded members about the Boards of Health/Ag. Comm. virtual forum on May 27th at 7pm that was emailed to members. Green & Traver will be attending. Turnheim will be unable to due to the CRWG meeting happening at the same time.

Traver motioned to adjourn. Turnheim seconded. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned 8:16pm.

Submitted by: Kerri Green