

Harvard Agricultural Advisory Commission (HAAC)

Town of Harvard, MA

Minutes of Meeting March 31, 2021

Approved September 29, 2021

Present: Kerri Green - chair, Rob Traver, Christiane Turnheim, Matt Varrell

Called meeting to order 7:06pm

No minutes were available to approve.

ACAP & Harvard Grown

Expression of Interest for MVP Action Grant Update

Green and Turnheim submitted an EOI to MVP program for an action grant for funds to help execute the priorities within our ACAP report. Unfortunately after a Zoom meeting with Hillary King from the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs. She was trying to find some funding sources for a Project Manager as requested. But coming up with nothing. Green & Turnheim expressed that to complete the items in the ACAP we would need the help from someone outside of the commission to commit a certain number of hours to research & development. King found it disappointing that the consultant didn't produce a report that was easily executable by a volunteer commission. Turnheim felt King's opinion of the report was her way of giving us permission to shelf it due to it not being realistic for Ag. Comm. to execute on their own. Which is frustrating for the Commission and likely for the state as well.

Varrell suggested that maybe we could utilize the assistance of students/interns - perhaps WPI students via Traver. Turnheim also mentioned Bromfield's Green Team. Varrell suggested just handing the ACAP report to a group and ask them to see what they might want to pursue as a project. Members agreed this is a good idea to pursue.

ACAP Report

Turnheim reported that the CRWG has asked about the posting of the ACAP report on the town website, and to participate in an outreach campaign. Traver asked what would the downside be if we didn't participate. Turnheim said for her it would be that the more people that see the report, the questions of what is Ag. Comm. doing about it/with it, and ultimately in order to execute the action priorities we would need the help of a project manager/staff, which we don't have. Varrell agreed, but also pointed out that making it part of the campaign might spur some interest/volunteers to help facilitate.

Green pointed out that the report was based on input of 9 respondents which is a snippet of Harvard's ag community and is hesitant as to how the priorities might be interpreted by the reader. Varrell suggested a cover letter that highlighted the small number of respondents and

that the ranking of priorities was not formulated on the input of the broader Ag. Community. Traver would be willing to draft an intro letter highlighting points discussed. Traver asked if members want to send him any particular points in an email to him by Friday, he would draft something by Sunday.

ACAP Priority Actions

Circling back to the mention of utilizing students, Traver mentioned there is a new masters program at WPI on "Climate Adaptability Management" which is a program that is training individuals to do the types of projects presented in these types of reports. There are also the undergrads who are more suited for studies than management. Traver said if we want to move forward with anything we have to put it into a formal request in the form of a scope. Green asked members to review the ACAP report with the goal of utilizing one of these groups.

Review of Re-formatted Brochure

Green shared the progress of making the brochure to fit on a 9x16 trifold. Green mentioned needing to double check on a few entities - Flint Locke, Fruitlands and Community Harvest Project. Varrell said he would reach out to his contact at Fruitlands to get info, photo, logo, etc.

Harvard Grown Content

Tabling to another meeting when more members are present.

Member Updates

Turnheim - members of Bromfield's Green Team are planning to promote any events that might be going on for Earth Day. So if anyone has anything to promote to reach out to the Contact Turnheim provided in the chat.

Traver - Land Stewardship might be working with NRCS on a conservation plan to repasture the Haskell land since Paul Willard isn't going to use the land to grow pumpkins anymore. There is also talk about having folks that are leasing town land for Ag to submit an annual report as to what was implemented and what was produced within that calendar year. The town of Lincoln does this.

Chair Updates

Member volunteer reappointment reminder. Carlson & Green have responded to Julie Doucet their intent to continue. McGovern is not continuing. Green suggested the Commission think about asking the Select Board to move folks to full voting members where available. But can discuss at a later date once there is a better idea of who is officially continuing.

Traver motioned to adjourn. Turnheim seconded. All were in favor. Adjourn 8:29pm

Submitted by K.Green