

Harvard Agricultural Advisory Commission (HAAC)

Town of Harvard, MA

Minutes of Meeting September 19, 2018

Approved: October 17, 2018

Members Present: Kerri Green, Nikki Schmidt, Rob Traver

Guests: John Reitman and Laura McGovern

Focus of Meeting:

- 1) Introduction of potential new members of the AAC
- 2) Discussion of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant
- 3) Update regarding Agritourism discussion with the Planning Board on 9/10/2018
- 4) Open discussion

Meeting was called to order at 7:10pm. After minutes were approved, Green introduced the Commission to two new potential members: John Reitman and Laura McGovern. They explained their involvement in agriculture in Harvard and answered questions from the group.

The majority of the evening's discussion centered around the \$35,000 grant that Harvard has been awarded to build resilience to climate change. Harvard was awarded additional funds to focus on the effects of climate change on agricultural operations in town. Green, a member of the MVP subcommittee, explained the current state of the grant, that the group is hearing proposals from three consultant groups and will choose one of them soon. The chosen consulting group will be tasked with facilitating a climate focussed agricultural survey and discussion workshop, with a second workshop to present the findings of the agricultural survey, and discuss potential mitigation recommendations.

The group had several questions about the grant, most specifically who will receive and oversee the distribution of the grant money, and how that money will be handed out. It was suggested that the AAC help formulate any survey the consultants might want to give to the town in regard to current risks and future risks. Green planned to discuss this with the MVP at their next meeting.

Update regarding the Planning Board meeting on September 10th, attended by Green, Carlson, McGovern and Schmidt, to address the potential need for a Agritourism Protective Bylaw in Harvard. The AAC advised the Planning Board to not move forward with an agritourism bylaw and to leave current definitions be. The AAC advised the Planning Board to wait until there were further definitions/guidelines released by the state before making any changes; they agreed.

During open discussion the members debated the proposal passed by the Board of Selectmen to swap current conservation land for playing fields. Green, McGovern and Schmidt agreed to attend the upcoming Conservation Commission meeting, and make a case against this swap, which was decided by the group, to not support taking land out of conservation to create more athletic fields.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24pm.

Submitted by: Nikki Schmidt