

Harvard Agricultural Advisory Commission (HAAC)

Town of Harvard, MA

Minutes of Meeting May 15, 2018

Approved: August 15, 2018

Present: Peter Basile (chair), Franklyn Carlson, Candace Frazer, Rob Traver.; Kerri Green (member nominee)

Guest: Eric Broadbent, Harvard Energy Advisory Committee

Focus of Meeting:

1. Agricultural Land and Harvard sustainability;
2. Agro-tourism and Planning Board, Town of Harvard

Called to order: 7:15 pm

Eric Broadbent briefed the Commission on a planning grant that examines Harvard's response to climate warming and other environmental changes that may, probably will, affect the characteristics of the town. For example, warmer climates and greater weather unpredictability may adversely affect the nature and extent of farming. In addition to the brief, Broadbent asked whether the Ag Commission had any specific concerns about Harvard's agriculture in relation to the scope of the planning grant. The Commission noted that many of the commercial farmers in Harvard (two are represented on the Commission—Carlson Orchards and Westward Orchards) are already responding to climate and weather differences through such practices as crop diversification and value-added agricultural products and services, but that more information collected in a systematic way, such as through professional surveys that might be sponsored by the planning grant, will be most welcome. Broadbent encouraged Ag Commission members to attend and promote an upcoming presentation titled "Climate Risk and Resiliency in Harvard," Thursday, 31 May, 7-9 pm, Town Hall. Broadbent ended his presentation with the hearty support of the Commission members.

The Commission then turned its attention to the issue of agro-tourism and the request of the Planning Board of the Town of Harvard to suggest to it some guidelines to consider the role and impact of agro-tourism in Harvard. The Commission notes that agro-tourism is not an easy matter to resolve, for like so many issues before the town, there are rival concerns that reach such important levels as the livelihoods of town residents and the quality of life for everyone. There are simply no easy principles or definitive cases. But the Ag Commission notes that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts itself has taken up the multi-dimensional aspects of agro-tourism and is crafting legislation that will provide some leadership and policy into this important matter. The Commission, therefore, suggests that the Planning Board wait for this state-level legislation before committing itself to official guidelines and ordinances for Harvard.

Meeting adjourned: 9:15 pm

Minutes by: Rob Traver