

Northampton Agricultural Commission - Minutes

7:00 PM Tuesday April 24, 2018

Planning & Sustainability, 210 Main Street, 2nd floor, City Hall
Northampton, MA

Members:

Chair John Omasta (JO)	Y	Chip Parsons (CP)	N	Stan Zawalick (SZ)	Y
Vice Chair Rich Jaescke (RJ)	Y	Tim Smith (TS)	N	Joe Rogers (staff) (JR)	Y
John Bobala (JB)	Y	Robert Vollinger (RV)	Y		

Also in attendance: Wayne Feiden

**** The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm ****

1. Request by Wayne Feiden, Director Planning & Sustainability for Agricultural Commission endorsement of the Northampton Open Space and Recreation Plan – *Wayne Feiden presented the updated PowerPoint slides related to the agriculture component of the Open Space Plan. Discussions included questions about the City’s forest harvesting and management philosophy. The City manages most of the public forest land for recreation, but is not opposed to future harvesting and habitat management plans. There have been some recent acquisitions where the land was harvested prior to the sale or as a condition of the sale. The Agriculture Commission expressed support of selective cutting and management on City properties from time to time. The topic of placing cameras at the entrances to the Meadows was discussed. There are pro’s and con’s to this approach, but illegal dumping and road/field damage continues to be a major concern for that area. The concept of Solar PV installations in the Meadows was also revisited. The commission would like to be part of the next review of policy process when it comes up again. A motion was made by RJ to endorse the Northampton Open Space and Recreation Plan, SZ seconded the motion, all were in favor.*
2. Meeting with Smith Vocational School Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter – *Students from the Smith School were unable to attend the meeting. It was decided to try a set up a meeting with the FFA student officers during the commission September meeting.*
3. Public Comment – *There was no public comment*
4. Approval of Agricultural Commission minutes of March 20, 2018 – *A motion to accept the 03/20/18 minutes was made by RJ and seconded by JO. All were in favor.*
5. Update on 2019 regional meeting outreach and feedback to date – *JR updated the commission on the feedback received to date from other commissions. There were some recommendations for ranking the importance of possible topics and also two volunteers to serve on a subcommittee. JR also reached out to the Franklin County Conservation District who along with the Hampshire/Hampden Conservation District may be able to help with some of the costs associated with the meeting. Meeting planning will be a major topic of the September commission meeting.*
6. Food Safety Talk Planning – *The commission would like to commit to hosting a community presentation related to the Food Safety Act. The concept would be to invite the speaker for next fall at a convenient date and possibly hold the event at the JFK community room if available. Both local agricultural users and the general public will be invited.*
7. Re-appointment to Agriculture Commission – *JR reminded the commissioners that many of their terms are set to expire this summer and that they will need to be sworn in over the summer in order to make quorum at the September meeting.*
 - John Omasta expires June 2018

- Rich Jaescke expires September 2018
- John Bobala expires June 2018
- Rob Vollinger expires September 2018
- Chip Parsons expires June 2018

8. Update if needed on City-owned agricultural properties

- Bleiman: Vacant
- Elwell: DeWitt Thomson (Happy Valley Organics)
- Mineral Hills: Henry Parsons (Mayval Farm)
- Montview: Madge Evers and Noah Baustin (MCCC)
- Cross Path Road:
- Broad Brook (Linseed Road): Jason Antosz (Antosz Farms) will work property

9. Any other necessary business not established when agenda set – *No additional business*

10. Set next meeting date – *The next meeting will be held on 09/18/18. The first portion of the meeting will be a joint meeting with Smith Vocational School FFA members.*

11. Adjourn – *A motion to adjourn was made by JO and seconded by RV at 8:25 pm.*