



COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES, VETERANS, CULTURE, AND RECREATION

Councilor Marianne LaBarge, Chair

Councilor Alisa F. Klein

Councilor Gina-Louise Sciarra

Meeting Minutes

Monday October 19, 2015

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street

Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building, Northampton, MA

*Activate NCTV Camera to Record Meeting

1. Members present/absent: At 4:05 pm Councilor LaBarge opened the meeting. All committee members were present.
2. Councilor LaBarge announced that the meeting would be Audio/Video taped.
3. Approval of Minutes of September 21, 2015—Councilor Sciarra moved to approve the minutes of Sept. 21, 2015; Councilor Klein seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No.
4. Public Comment--None
5. 4:05 p.m. – Phil Korman, Executive Director, Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)

CISA began over 20 years ago. It has about 11 full-time equivalent employees. Its mission is to strengthen farms and engage the community to build the local food economy. According to the non-profit bylaws, 1/3 of the board must be farmers. Right now 8 of the 19 board members are farmers.

a. Guiding principles include:

- Local prosperous and diverse farms are essential to the economic health and environmental quality of the region.
- An informed and engaged community is essential to the long-term sustainability of our local farms
- Everyone should have access to locally grown food and farm products.

b. Some of the initiatives include:

- Established Emergency farm fund after tropical storm Irene. The funds are generally available to multiple farms after natural disasters.
- Work to ensure that locally grown food is available throughout our region.
- “Local Hero” program was established by CISA. It is the longest buy local program in the country.
- Senior farm shares program provides local harvest to low income seniors since 2004.
- Technical assistance to farmers is available: downloadable worksheet, workshops, consulting, etc.

c. Northampton is lucky to have 3 farmer’s markets in the city. This is unusually given the population. By comparison, Springfield also has about 3 farmer’s markets.

d. A publication produced by CISA is “Locally Grown”, an agricultural magazine supported by CISA members, donors and sponsors.

- e. CISA is involved in connecting more people to local farms. Currently there are 406 farms and related businesses in this region that benefit from Local Hero marketing and educational efforts that build public demand for local farm products.
 - f. CISA is involved in the Massachusetts food policy program. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Food Protection Program has a guide to help farmers and businesses comply with Massachusetts and federal requirements in order to start a wholesale food business. A wholesale food business sells products to other businesses; it does not sell products directly to the consumer.
6. *5:00 p.m.* – Oona Coy, One of the founders of Tuesday Market Oona talked about her program and gave the committee the following details:
- a. Food Stamp connection @ Tuesday Market began in 2010.
 - b. Mass in Motion--Healthy Hampshire is a collaborative effort of Amherst, Belchertown, Northampton, and Williamsburg health and planning officials focusing on healthy eating, active living, and promotion of healthy and safe physical environments. Northampton is the lead community and serves as fiscal agent. The project is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Mass in Motion Municipal Wellness and Leadership Initiative.
 - c. Mass in Motion-Healthy Hampshire is focusing on two low income communities to improve food system to improve health. They are involved in helping Tuesday Market coordinate getting people together.
 - d. Oona's Town Farm had three people working the farm and one person who worked the farmer's market. The nature of farming is that it is very difficult the pay people well to do farming work. The farmer's market provides a variety of opportunities to many businesses. Some businesses may want to use the Farmer's Market to test products, others may want to use the forum to establish themselves before a wholesale market is viable, etc.

7. *5:30 p.m.* – Clem Clay, Executive Director, Grow Food Northampton
The mission of the program is to promote food security by advancing sustainable agriculture in the area.
 Goals include: increase the supply and access of space for food growing ; educate the community about sustainable agriculture; support the development of a vibrant local agricultural economy.

Fresh Food Program at the Senior Center: Costs \$1 per week; seniors must meet one of four income "tests"—it is called the Senior Farm Share Program. There are 30 slots; with 55 applicants the program made a decision to help all of the applicants. The program is run through a grant. Grow Food Northampton also sponsors workshops. GFN is also trying to work a similar model at schools.

Grow Food Northampton provides double SNAP shares to make fresh local food more accessible.
 Grow Food Northampton donates to hunger relief agencies, such as the Northampton Survival Center and Manna Soup Kitchen. They also coordinate volunteers for all deliveries.

8. Questions and Answers

City Councilor Marianne LaBarge spoke about the agenda for the Month of November 2015. Right now she has planned Sheri Hall Smith, Board President, CASA LATINA and Cliff McCarthy, President, Pioneer Valley

History Network. They will be giving the committee updates about their programs. Also coming in will be Lucy Hartry, Northampton Health Services Manager, Tapestry Health and Cheryl Zoll, CEO Of Tapestry Health . They too will be giving the committee an update about their programs.

9. NEW BUSINESS – *Reserved for topics that the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed*

10. ADJOURN

Respectfully Submitted by:

Pamela L. Powers

Administrative Assistant to the City Council

413-587-1210

ppowers@northamptonma.gov