

East Haddam Agriculture Commission Minutes December 5, 2011

Call to Order: Chairman Thomas at 7:10pm

Attendance: Members: Scot Mackinnon, Jess Stone, Harvey Thomas, Dennie Burak, Peg Carlson. Citizens: Roger Stube and Ruth Neudecker representing the Rathbun Farmers' Market.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the November meeting were approve as submitted. Burak, Mackinnon

Liaison Reports: None

Agriculture Commission Web Site: Publicity for the Agriculture Commission web site will be arranged using posters at places like Shagbark, the Gristmill, etc.

Community Agriculture Center: Jess Stone and Scot Mackinnon continue to develop ideas for a community agriculture center, including investigating the pros and cons of various sites both town and privately owned, funding sources, etc. When more specifics are available, presentations will be made to those town boards and commissions whose involvement and/or approval is required.

Farmers Seller/Swap process: Posters publicizing the Agriculture Commission web-site and the seller/swap facility have been put up in local businesses and gathering places.

Farmers' Market: Representatives from the Rathbun Farmers' Market briefed the Commission about their operation. The Rathbun Farmers' Market has been in operation for 12 years with the organizational work being done by 2 volunteers. The market is open Saturdays from 8:00am to 10:00am. Vendors are charged \$5.00 per table and on average they have 6 vendors of whom 5 are regulars. All the vendors are small scale producers. They average between 20 and 30 patrons. The small scale of the market allows it to be run by the 2 volunteers but presents a circular dilemma: Few vendors want to commit to such a small market but the size of the market cannot increase without more vendors. The question is how to increase interest in vendors and patrons. Jess Stone indicated she knows of farmers who would like to find a place to sell their output, indicating that future cooperation between the Rathbun market and the Commission should be scheduled for the Spring of 2012. The Rathbun representatives indicated that if a larger market were to be established they would be interested in a mutually advantageous cooperative arrangement.

Farm Inventory: Need to find e-mail addresses for the farmers identified on the inventory.

Membership: The initial terms of 2 regular members and 1 alternate member expire January 1, 2012. In addition, 1 alternate member position was never filled. The Commission has received applications from 2 individuals. At its January 16, 2012 meeting, the Commission will develop a membership recommendation to pass along to the Board of Selectmen.

Audience of Citizens: See Farmers Market above.

2012 Meeting Schedule: The Commission approved the 2012 meeting schedule as follows (all meetings will be in the Town Office Annex at 7PM):

Jan 16

Feb 6

Mar 5

Apr 2

May 7

June 4

July 2

Aug 6

Sep 5

Oct 1

Nov 5

Dec 3

Jan, 2012, 7

Adjourn: 8:30pm, Burak, Mackinnon.