

AGRICULTURE COMMISSION
Monday, May 6, 2013
Town Office Annex

MINUTES
(Approved by the Commission)

1. Call to order: 7:05
2. Attendance: Present: Scot Mckinnon (Reg), Harvey Thomas (Reg), Peter Dean (Reg), Linda Stuhlman (Reg), Marianne Halpin (Alt), and Jeff Savitsky (Alt).
3. Approval of Minutes: Deferred until next meeting.
4. Liaison Reports: None
5. Ongoing Projects:
 - A. Farmers' Market:
 - The 2013 Farmers' Market is scheduled to open June 5th.
 - This year's Farmers' Market has been hampered by the fact that the joint EDC/Ag Commission Farmers' Market subcommittee was disbanded by the Board of Selectmen and as yet the proposed Board of Selectmen Farmers' Market Committee has not picked up the ball.
 - Among the questions raised and for which there was no answer are:
 - a. Has the BOS Farmers' Market committee been populated and has it met?
 - b. Has a 2013 Market Manager been appointed?
 - c. What are the Committee's plans for staffing, publicity, signage, etc.?
 - Concern was expressed about:
 - a. Agriculture Commission members volunteered their time throughout the 2012 Farmer's Market but they were then simply told that the joint subcommittee had been disbanded without further communication or thanks.

- b. Given this treatment, there is reluctance to volunteer again.
- c. If the Market fails this summer due to lack of organization, staffing, publicity, etc., it will be a disservice to those vendors who have foregone the opportunity to be at other successful markets in order to support the East Haddam Market.
- d. If the market fails in the summer of 2013, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to have a market in future years.
- e. What is the proposed timing of the refurbishment and landscaping of the Town Meeting Hall and Grange and what effect will it have on the Farmers' Market?

- Despite the uncertainty and disorganization, Mr. Savitsky has assumed that a 2103 market will be held and is happy about the number of vendors who have committed to the market.
- A source for 2013 signage has been identified.
- The possibility of approaching Deb Mathiasen to do publicity on a paid basis was discussed.
- Presumably, it would be the Farmers' Market Committee that would authorize such expenditures.
- However, there is need for volunteer help to staff the market.

- Messers Dean, Savitsky and Thomas were asked to meet with the Selectmen to see what can be done to ensure that the Farmers' Market is successful this summer and in the future.

- B. Website Management: No Report. Jess Stone continues to oversee the website despite having resigned from the Commission.
- C. Center for Community Agriculture (for information only): A grant for \$20,000 for fencing has been received and accepted at Town Meeting on March 28, 2013. In addition a STEAP grant for \$431,200 to develop an agricultural business incubator and community farm has been received from the state and a gift of \$16,000 for a timber frame garden shed has been received from Consumer Union. The later two

items have yet to be accepted at Town Meeting. The ground has been cleared and a cover crop planted. It is expected that the first clients will be able to sign up for the summer 2014 growing season.

7. Audience of Citizens/Guests: None

8. Adjournment: 7:50