

Stockbridge Agricultural and Forestry Commission Meeting

January 8, 2024 Minutes

Present

Agricultural and Forestry Commission	Guests
Mathieu Boudreau, chair Erik Rasmussen, co-chair (via Zoom) Lisa Bozzuto Abigail Fredsall	Patrick White Lionel Delevingne Stuart Kelso Amanda and Alberto Barcenas

1. Matt called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

Matt made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of December 4

Motion approved unanimously.

2. **Updates:** Affordable Housing for Farmers/Farm Crews

Eric Rasmussen, Patrick White, Mathieu Boudreau and Ann Gobi from Rural Affairs met to look into how farmers and farm workers can find affordable housing. Ann may investigate more with MDAR (MA Dept of Agriculture), MDAR typically does not approve new buildings in APRs. Matt and Patrick will follow up with this.

3. **Updates:** Composting

Matt Boudreau and Abby Fredsall spoke with Mark at the transfer station. Mark remains interested in getting composting set up at the transfer station and plans to speak with the SelectBoard about this.

There is a sheet on the wall of the SwapShop for people to sign up if they are interested in composting. Signatures have filled a page.

Lisa Bozzuto and Abby Fredsall plan to visit the Sheffield transfer station on January 20th to see how they have set up composting there. Lisa will contact Rene Woods, from the Sheffield SelectBoard to set this up

4. **Updates:** Farmers Market

Stuart Kelso spoke of this rationale for having a Farmer's Market: it provides access to good food; supports local farmers; brings people to downtown Stockbridge.

A summary of Stuart's work had been attached to the agenda for this meeting.

Matt Boudreau asked how an anchor farm would feel about being part of a small market?

Stuart talked about the paperwork that would need to be submitted for SNAP/HIP payments. The Town Administrator would need to submit applications soon for this.

To meet deadlines, final decisions on the Market will be made at the February meeting.

5. **Discussion:** Prado de Lana Wool Sheep Farming in Stockbridge

Amanda and Alberto Bercenas recently purchased property on Rattlesnake Mountain Rd. They plan to build a home, a barn, put up fencing and to use the property for grazing.

Mathieu expressed support for these efforts. Lisa Bozzuto recommended they work with the Stockbridge Conservation Commission as some of the buildings may be in wetlands buffer zones.

6. Discussion: Enforcement of Forest Stewardship Plans

Patrick White reported that he has been in contact with Colin from DCR who has looked at current and expired management plans as well as properties under conservation restrictions. Patrick was interested in possibly having the AFC or the Conservation Commission (CC) review these restrictions. Lisa Bozzuto pointed out that this is a very labor intensive effort that is typically completed by paid employees.

Mathieu suggested creating a list of the properties that could be stored with the AFC and CC. Lisa Bozzuto informed the Commission that Rich Bradway from the Stockbridge Land Trust had explored a software option that could give town commissions access to software for this task. She will pass that information to Patrick White and Mathieu Boudeau. Patrick said it may be something that could be funded through the Community Preservation Commission (CPC).

Lionel Delevingne spoke of recent cutting he has observed on Wheatley Rd. He noted the loss of the forest, of the scenic beauty and commented that there are fewer bird sightings since the trees have been cut.

Lisa Bozzuto informed him that this cutting was on the agenda for the CC meeting on 1/9/2024 and encouraged him to attend.

Patrick White spoke of a proposal he wants the AFC to bring to the CPC for funding to expand planting on town properties, possibly for 1000 trees/year for several years. Patrick suggested using administrative funds from the CPC for tracking where the trees will be planted. Mathieu and Patrick will discuss this further.

7. Discussion: Arbor Day

Lisa Bozzuto provided an order form from a NY State nursery where tree seedlings will be purchased for an Arbor Day distribution. Mathieu suggested purchasing hazelnut, black walnut, black cherry and witch hazel. Lisa will purchase these shortly before supplies run out. Austen Riggs Green Team has committed to reimbursing for the cost of the saplings and will provide further support with volunteers and logistics.

Abby Fredsall said that Monument Valley High School reports having "some" tree seedlings to contribute and that the students will also design educational pamphlets. The event will take place on April 26 at noon.

8. Adjournment:

Next meeting is Monday, February 5 at 6:30pm

Matt made a motion to adjourn at 7:51pm. Passed unanimously.

Minutes Respectfully submitted by Lisa Bozzuto