

TOWN OF GRANBY
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
Minutes
January 28, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michelle Niedermeyer, John O'Brien, Pam Burek, Erin Pirro, Ellen Whitlow

Others: Kate Bogli, Ann Wilhelm, Bill Bentley, Dorothy Hayes, MaryAnn Curling

The meeting was called to order by Michelle Niedermeyer at 7:05 p.m.

Granby Sampler

Mary Ann Curling gave a report on the Granby Sampler program. Originally funded by a SARE grant (Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education), the program has been in existence since 2010. Starting with 25 subscribers, the program peaked in 2011 with 44 subscribers, and has steadily declined since then. Last year there were only 13 subscribers. Interest from farmers has also decreased. The goal of the program was to introduce people to local agriculture products, and in that it has succeeded. The rise of farmer's markets and farm stores in the area since has probably accounted for the drop in subscribers and farm participation in the Sampler program. Because of the Sampler, Open Farm Day, and the opening of farmers' markets in the area, there is certainly a greater awareness of and ease of purchasing local farm products.

The commission and guest farmers discussed the future of the Sampler program and/or other programs which might serve the same purpose. Some ideas included:

- 1) Postcards or letters to newcomers to let them know about local farms and farm products.
- 2) Using email information from Open Farm Day passports to send monthly news about farms.
- 3) Improving local farmers' websites
- 4) Adding more Holiday Farmers' Markets (possibly Springtime/Easter and Fourth of July)

ON A MOTION by Pam Burek, seconded by Erin Pirro, the commission voted unanimously to discontinue the Granby Sampler in 2015.

ON A MOTION by Erin Pirro, seconded by Pam Burek, the commission voted unanimously to write a letter to the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program, thanking them for the grant and letting them know about the success of the Granby Sampler.

ON A MOTION by Erin Pirro, seconded by John O'Brien, the commission voted to take the remaining money from the Granby Sampler program (\$183) and use it to create postcards to introduce newcomers to the local farms and their resources and websites. All approved.

Community Agriculture Assessment

Commission members reviewed the responses to the Agriculture Assessment tool. The town's compliance was rated and suggestions for improvements were made in the following categories:

- 1) Understanding agriculture in your town
- 2) Creating a supportive business environment for farming
- 3) Supporting appropriate tax policies for farmland and buildings
- 4) Developing Strategies to protect your town's farmlands
- 5) Limiting the impacts of new developments on agriculture

The commission would like to codify Granby's support of agriculture with a local Right to Farm ordinance. Having such an ordinance would set Granby apart from other nearby communities.

Michelle will update the executive summary of the Assessment and prepare it for a presentation to the Board of Selectman. The commission will finalize plans for the presentation at the March 11 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lauren Stuck
Recording Secretary