

Natural Products and Agriculture Working Group

Minutes 9 26 24 Approved

Location: Auburn Senior Center

Recorder: Dave Griswold

Staff attending: None

Attending:

Kathy Shaw, David Bell, Dave Griswold, Joe Gray, Pam Rousseau

Excused: Ed Michaud, Chris Carson

Absent: Katie Boss, Chelsea Eaton, Michelle Mallegrano

Guests: Tom Kuklinski, USAD Farm Loan Manager, USDA Farm Service Agency

Call to Order: 6:39 pm

Public Participation: None

1. **Minutes:** None. Dave did not have an opportunity to write up the minutes from the 8 29 minutes. He will have them for the October meeting.
2. **Farm Loan Criteria:** Tom Kuklinski, USDA Farm Service Agency Farm Loan Manager for 10 Maine counties reviewed types of loans available from USDA. Loans are focused on entities and individuals who are unable to get loans from commercial sources. There is a detailed application and qualification process. Beginning farmers must have a business plan and commitments from markets. Education, experience and a mentoring relationship are helpful. Farm tourism and educational activities alone are not qualifiers. There must be farming going on at the time the loan is granted. There are criteria for what is an eligible project. A qualified borrower may not have a loss on a previous loan. Handouts included USDA Farm Service Agency documents "Farm Loans Overview", "Farm Loan Information Chart", "Microloans", and several pages of definitions from the document 3-FLP (Rev. 2) Amend. 54.
3. **Public Participation :** Jason Levesque expressed his concerns that
 - a. NP&AgWG minutes for 2024 were not posted. Dave confirmed that minutes had been prepared and that he would look into the situation.

- b. All agriculture should not be banned in the Lake Auburn Watershed if proper practices are used.
 - c. The process to approve farm plans in Auburn is being improperly implemented and is unfair to applicants.
- 4. **Fall Farm Tour:** Saturday, Oct 19 is confirmed. Kathy is working with Liz Allen on publicity.
- 5. **Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee:** The order establishing an ad hoc committee to develop criteria to determine a bona fide farming, agriculture, recreational or natural resource use in the AGRP, Order# 123-09162024 was reviewed.
- 6. **AMS Garden and Beyond:** Pam reviewed her efforts setting up a club at AMS. Seven students meet weekly.
- 7. **New Members:** Chloe and Grant Meyers of Open Heart Farm will be brought forward to the SNRB as new working group members.

New Business: None

Next meetings: Oct 24, location TBA; Nov 26, Senior Center

Adjourned: 7:47PM