

Natural Products and Agriculture Working Group

Minutes 6 25 26 Approved:

Location: Auburn Hall, Room 204

Recorder: Dave Griswold

Staff attending: None

Attending: Dave Griswold, Kathy Shaw, Chloe Meyers, Grant Roberts, Camille Parrish

Excused: Pam Rousseau, Joe Gray, David Bell

Absent: Chris Carson

Guests:

Call to Order: 6:15 pm

Public Participation: None

1. **Minutes:** Approved minutes from 5 28 26
2. **Public Comment:** None
3. **City Process for approving Farm Plan:**
 - a. Sam Peikes presented the new City Farm Plan Review Process and Standard Operating Procedure which is about to be adopted. It includes a step for NP&AgWG to review plans and respond to the following questions:
 - i. Is the submitted Farm Business feasible?
 - ii. Does the Farm Business Plan meet the definition of “bono fide”?
 - iii. Does the Farm Business Plan present agriculture as the principal use of the property?
 - iv. Is the proposed single-family home presented as an accessory use of the Farm Plan?
 - v. What additional questions does the Farm Business Plan application raise?
 - vi. What agricultural resources are available that the City can refer the applicant to, in order to strengthen their Farm Business Plan and set them up for success with farming in Auburn?
 - b. A motion was passed asking staff to review the 30 day time requirement for plan review, since the Working Group meets monthly and special meetings would be a burden.
 - c. There was a general discussion of ideas to support new farmers.

4. **Approval of new chair:** The members voted to appoint Chloe Meyers as chair, effective immediately. Thanks to Kathey Shaw for her many years of effective leadership. Kathy remains as a working group member.
5. **Farm “Crawl” Planning:**
 - a. Dave provided documents that might be the model for a brochure and “passport” used by the Maine statewide quilter’s “SHOP HOP”, an annual event which lasts during April. The brochure includes name, address, and hours of participants; an overview; and a map. Shops are grouped regionally.
 - b. Discussion of how to involve the library to provide information
 - c. Discussion about how to recruit participants.
 - d. Plan for roll out in 2027.
6. **Dark Sky presentation:** Chelsea Eaton presented information about Dark Sky International. LD 1934, recently passed, provides a sample ordinance to promote low impact lighting, which is cost effective and beneficial to humans and wildlife. It was suggested that Chelsea send information to Lauren Caffee for consideration in the comp plan, and to Councilor Adam Platz. Chelsea is starting the process to get Dark Sky certification for Whistle Ridge Life Forest.
7. **East Auburn School Garden Project:**
 - a. East Auburn staff plans to install raised bed gardens to integrate with the curriculum. Beds will cost about \$40 each using hemlock lumber. Garbage to Gardens is providing a soil donation.
 - b. A motion was passed to provide up to \$500 for bed construction materials.
8. **SWCD plant sale:** orders may be picked up at Open Heart Farm on May 15th.

New Business:

SWCD reviewed the application process for NRCS grants at a recent meeting.

Next meetings: May 28 Auburn Hall Room 204 at 6:00

Adjourned: 7:25

