

Agricultural Commission Minutes 11-03-15

Town of Bolton Agricultural Commission
Meeting Minutes
Date: November 3, 2015

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

www.boltonag.com

63 Main Street
978 779-2297 or 779-3308

Members:

Eric Schartner 779-0212 schartnerfarm@verizon.net Term Exp 6/30/2013
Janet Johnson 779-2724 janetmargjohnson@comcast.net Term Exp 6/30/2015
Teresa Sauer 634-1369 arcemedes5@yahoo.com Term exp 6/30/2016
Ada Woolston 779-5081 gardenada@gmail.com Term exp 6/30/2018
Prospective member:
Gentry Ferrell 634-2113 gcferrell@gmail.com Term exp 6/30/2018

A meeting of the Bolton Agricultural Commission was held on November 3, 2015 at Town Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:45. Commission members in attendance:, Eric Schartner , Janet Johnson, Theresa Sauer, and prospective member Gentry Ferrell. Absent was Ada Woolston

The August 2012 minutes were approved and submitted.

Reports from liaisons to Town Boards/Commissions

- **Board of Health** No Report
- **Planning Board** (Schartner) No report
- **Board of Selectmen** (Johnson): No Report
- **Conservation Commission** (Pelletier): No Report
- **Conservation Trust** (No Report)

Complaints/Requests for Site Visits

- **Complaints/Requests for Site Visits:**

Appointments

- Prospective: Gentry Ferrell
- Chairperson: Janet Johnson nominated and seconded
- Secretary pro tempore: Gentry Ferrell

New Business

1. Welcome Ada and Teresa

Teresa welcomed as new member, Ada will be introduced at future meeting

2. New chairperson, secretary

Janet Johnson nominated and seconded as new Chairperson

Gentry Ferrell acted as Secretary pro tempore

3. Status of signs

Issue of signs now with Economic Development Commission

4. The Ag Comm role in helping farmers

Copies of Bolton Agricultural By-Law handed out to Eric, Teresa, and Gentry

There was a general discussion about increasing the Ag. Comm's engagement with new/newer farms to help them build relationships with other farmers, animal control, the police and pro-actively address any potential issues such as fencing. Actions that could align Bolton more closely with other farm-friendly communities:

- Invite animal control officer to Ag. Comm. Meeting to share perspectives on the realities of farm animals, fencing, and the impact of the 2013 amendment to 110-8 of the Bolton by-laws and recent methods of applying that rule.
- Identify whether the punitive extent of 110-8 is found in other established farm-friendly communities.
- Confirm the legal liability limitations of those leasing farm land to farmers whose livestock do escape.
- There was a general sense that what happened to Earnest Farms could have been avoided with more direct engagement and a community-based approach that included the Ag. Comm, other farmers, animal control, and the police department.

5. Jan and Ada report on Central MA Ag Comm meeting in Rutland.

Jan reviewed key findings:

There are new FDA rules relating to making farm products traceable and reducing exposure of fruits/veg to e. coli and other things. Farms with income below \$25,000 are exempt (78%) of MA farms, which covers most farms in Bolton.

Jan shared publication of Central Mass Grown, a non-profit based in Central MA for promoting local farming.
<http://centralmassgrown.org/about-the-us/>

6. Assabet Village Coop forming in Maynard

Coop now has 478 members. At 800 they will hire a general manager and at 900 a location for the Coop determined. Coop would focus on carrying local organic and conventional produce in season, which could benefit farms in Bolton and surrounding communities.

In support of providing local farmers with information on certification process for Organic farming, Jan proposed having Bay State Certifiers hold presentation in Bolton.

7. Future events

- Next Ag. Comm. Meeting scheduled for Tues, Dec. 15th at 6:30pm
- Plan to have meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of every month starting in 2016 (first meeting Jan. 12th)
- Possible presentation by Bay State Certifiers in 2016 on Organic certification process

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45.