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Falmouth Agricultural Commission
Small Conference Room on January 27, 2020 at 6:30pm

Present:

Karen Schwalbe, Chair

Amy Vickers, absent

Matt Churchill

Jane Vose, Vice Chair

Warren Collins

Heidi Walz

Jack Simonds

April Merriam, Recording Secretary, absent

Chair Schwalbe called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Stan Ingram of Farming Falmouth was present.

AGENDA

Old Business:

Cranberry Bogs Maintenance on West Thomson and Flax bogs:

** Matt will reach out to Brian Handy regarding bog management to attend AgComm meeting.

** Karen will reach out to Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association to attend AgComm meeting.

** Stan will contact ConCom to alert them that AgComm will do bog mowing, deck clearing and ditch maintenance in March on both bogs.

** Karen: Procure heavy duty lawn mower and weed whacker with saw blade.

** Contact DPW to chip the cuttings or manage the piles when needed.

** Primer on bogs requested by Jane, Jack and Warren: History, location, who owns, AgComm responsibilities. Chair Schwalbe stated she would put this on the February agenda and schedule a site visit for the board.

Andrews Farm: Care and Control: Chair Schwalbe spoke with Peter Johnson-Staub on the phone about Care and Control of Andrews Farm. This topic is on the Selectmen's agenda tonight. The ConCom and AgComm are both in support and Town Meeting has voted on this item. Care and Control will change to AgComm from ConCom. This is an administrative task and then it goes to the State. Town of Falmouth bought the property along with the 300 Committee: Town owns the farm parcel and 300 Committee owns the 9 acres along the river. Each parcel has restrictions and the enforcement of the restrictions goes to another organization. The 300 Committee parcel, the Town has oversight and vice versa with the farm parcel. The 300 Committee applied for the grant, land management plan, farm plan, lease and CR. The CR has a requirement that the overseeing body, 300 Committee, check the parcel annually to protect the rights of the Town such as encroachment by an abutter, erosion issues. A group was formed with ConCom, Karen Schwalbe and 300 Committee who did the walk through last year in addition to NRCS for 2019. So, the AgComm instead of ConCom will be the contact body. If there is an issue with the lease, AgComm would be the intermediary between Town and Lessor. If Geoff Andrews, lessor, wants to do a major change on the farm this would show up in the Farm Plan. The Land Management is a long-term plan for land use and the CR doesn't change. Geoff Andrews has to show proof of insurance to the Town as part of the lease and Town oversees lease details. A chart needs to be made up showing the responsibilities of ConCom, 300 Committee, AgComm and Geoff Andrews with timetable.

Chair Schwalbe Task: Check with State Representatives David Viera and Dylan Fernandez regarding grant monies. The AgComm can hold monies. Once Care and Control of Andrews Farm is in AgComm's hands, all the final versions of the documents and PDFs will be organized.

Stan Ingram: NRCS and Geoff Andrews are working on an irrigation plan for the farm and/or replacement of the main line. NRCS paid a large portion and 80% will be reimbursed. Mr. Andrews has a 20 year lease and a 5 year circuit breaker lease. Who has oversight on the irrigation project? The RFP was written for protection for the Town and a 20 year lease. If the owner has problems and doesn't want to continue farming, the 5 year lease gives farmer a way out without penalty.

Lecture Series: Falmouth Public Library from 6 or 7 to 9pm on Thursdays evenings.

Publicity: Press release and posters: Karen Schwalbe and Amy Vickers

March 26: Warren will speak to Li Ling Hamedi and Elisa Carey and see if March 26th works.

April 23: Stan will speak on Seed Starting.

May 28: Pest Control or Goats

June 25: Pest Control or Goats

Speakers: Warren will contact Russ Norton about May 28th or June 25 to speak on organic Pest Control and safety in using pesticides. Karen Schwalbe will speak with Megan about May 28th or June 25th on chickens and Megan on her goats. Each speaker will send Chair Schwalbe a very brief description of their lecture. Chair Schwalbe will create Facebook events. Warren will ask Li Ling if she can attend our February meeting.

Community Garden Update: Stan Ingram reported that the CG is 80% full and there are requests for more raised beds. Dick Pooley and Stan spoke with Joe at the Rec Center about Emerald House. A letter will be submitted to the BOS to get on their agenda to discuss an Emerald House Community Garden project. CPC will be contacted for funding for a ¾ of an acre parcel which is larger than the CG area at Andrews Farm. The Rec Center person Joe asked about educational beds and his department might be interested in sponsoring classes. The possible location at Emerald House is the open field going down in the back of the house. There is not enough time to get it on the spring Town Meeting warrant so hopefully on the Fall Town Meeting warrant.

Pesticide Working Group: Chair Schwalbe stated that an email arrived today regarding the Glyphosate update and wanted the ban on Glyphosate to lapse. A committee will be formed to oversee pesticide use in Falmouth with 5 recommendations: 1. Ban to be lifted; 2. Town departments using pesticides should adopt and strictly adhere to an integrated pest management philosophy grounded by minimal use; 3. Town departments should submit their integrated pest management plans and a record of pesticides use to BOH for review on an annual basis; 4. Pesticide use on school grounds should be first approved by the BOH; 5. Standing committee on Falmouth pesticide use should be formed and sanctioned by the BOS. No further meeting anticipated by the Working Group. The email will be attached to the minutes.

New Business:

Chair Schwalbe will do the annual AgComm report presentation to the BOS on April 27.

AgComm Potential Annual Work Plan or Action Plan topics:

**Land Access: Town-owned land for farming:

**Food Access, health and getting local food into communities:

**Education and Training like the Lecture series and creation of other series.

**Local Branding: Highlight local farms in the newspaper

**AgComm in Development: Grant writing workshops, AgComm holding of funds procedures; mediation workshop between landowners;

**Policy book and explain regulations that apply to farming:

**Advocacy: State level agriculture projects

**Ag Land lost to development:

**Community Gardens:

**Climate changes and adaptation for farming:

**Resilience and skill retention:

Next Meeting: March 30, 2020

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.