



David B. Cohen
Mayor

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NEWTON FARM COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

January 8, 2009
7:00 pm at Newton City Hall
Room 209

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Harper, Chair; J. Hepburn, P. Lewenberg, L. Mottard
R. Lipof, V. Schnell,

MEMBERS ABSENT: D. Lang, L. Bruyn, R. Shoul

Newton Community Farm Inc. Report

Report on Farm Operation

Becka reported there are no crops, now that winter is here. Greg is painting, insulating the kitchen and basement in the house, and planning for next year. Shares will go on sale in February. The web site provides dates and event reminders.

Update on Barn Work

The barn roof is completed and the barn door plan was sent out via email. All of Phase IA is now done. The doors are under construction and will be installed by February. The barn can not be used for public events, only for storage, since it has no heat or restrooms.

J. Hepburn raised concerns again about the process for selecting materials to be used and for reviewing information/decisions/feedback in the decision-making process. P. Barrer said the NCF will work with the NFC to make sure there is good communication and that all are kept informed. B. Lever relayed to Anne that he thought the diagram portrayed something different that what was approved by the Historic Commission. When asked, Anne said she thought it might be a perceptual difference. J. Harper wants documents distributed to the farm (NCF) members to come to the NFC members at the same time.

The porch, which was approved by Historic as a concept, should have details viewed and approved by NFC as well as Historic.

General Business & Announcements

Business Plan

Becka said if any comments/concerns/other feedback, need it now to take to the NCF meeting next week. The price of a CSA share is being increased from \$525 to \$570 and 3 more shares are being added, while

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the season is being extended. The Education program is in growing, with more classes for adults and families. The Coordinator worked for shares last year for organizing the classes. Most of the people teaching the classes are volunteers. This year \$6,500 is budgeted for a coordinator. Fundraising efforts are expected to bring in less this year because of the economy. P. Lewenberg advised not to aim too low, and said organizations are still reaping donations. The Expanded Spring Festival will sell seedlings this year, and the farm is extending its use of the greenhouse. There is no conflict with the city calendar for the festival. Less money is expected for the barn fund, but the Community Farm will be looking for larger grants, and, perhaps CPA funds. Costs have increased slightly over last year, with insurance the single largest expense. Segregating this item in the budget makes it look as if the farm manager's salary has gone down, when part of his remuneration has just shifted to insurance. Part-time staff are keeping the web site up to date and doing some administrative work. V. Schnell said the assistant farmer does a lot and his salary is still pretty low, while the education coordinator's salary seems high. The salaries will be evaluated annually and may grow. Tom is paid only for the growing season, but he got a raise and a bonus. The education coordinator works all year, not just in the growing season.. V. Schnell said she is interested in helping with any connections with schools. Becka asks all to review the Business Plan so they will be prepared to vote on the plan in February.

Contract with Newton Community Farm

P. Barrer said the NCF and the NFC need a process for reviewing and evaluating – R. Lipof wants to be involved. P. Lewenberg has been working with the Waltham CSA. V. Schnell said Louise is not feeling well and sends “regrets.”

December Minutes for approval

Motion by P. Lewenberg to approve December meeting minutes as written. Second by J. Hepburn.
Vote: All in favor, except P. Lewenberg, abstaining.

Miscellaneous

MA Ag Commissions Conference- Jan 23-24. R. Lipof is interested in attending and will get materials from Anne.

