



David B. Cohen  
Mayor

# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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## NEWTON FARM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

**March 5, 2009**  
**7:00 pm at City Hall**  
**Rm 209**

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Harper, Chair, D. Lang, L. Mottard, R. Shoul, L. Bruyn, V. Schnell

MEMBERS ABSENT: P. Lewenberg, R. Lipof, J. Hepburn,

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Rebekah Smillie, Gene Rubin

### **Newton Community Farm Inc. Report**

#### *Report on Farm Operation/*

B. Smillie reported that the NCF has approved a new membership category – the cost will be something like \$35 for an individual and \$60 for a family. Memberships will come with discounts for classes and members can attend members-only events. NCF is hoping to attract sponsors from around Newton. May 17<sup>th</sup> is the annual Seedling Sale (members will be able to preview) and new members receive a potted plant. There will be aprons and hats for sale with the new farm logo. The City's (Newton Pride) plant sale at City Hall is May 16<sup>th</sup>, and that plant sale has different types of plants. CSA members will be automatically counted as members this year. Next year, purchase of a membership is needed to be a CSA. Membership will be based on a calendar year. The membership drive will replace the Spring Appeal next year. NCF also approved moving the \$ for health insurance to a "benefits" category for Greg, since his wife has a new job that is paying health insurance. NCF will appoint a 3-person committee to determine how to spend/allocate the money in the "benefits" account.

#### *Barn update*

The barn door is coming the end of March.

At the farm, Greg just planted the last of the trees (for mitigation of removal of street trees) and has started seedling trays. The courses are doing well with recent classes including more on processing food, e.g., jam & jelly-making, beer-making, and two bread-making classes. Spring classes will start using the "learning garden." A job description is ready for the education coordinator position and will be distributed soon. The farm may be renting the community garden program plots in the Parks and Recreation property at

### **Newton Farm Commission**

1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, Massachusetts 02459

[www.ci.newton.ma.us](http://www.ci.newton.ma.us)

Nahanton for their middle school classes. Two new members of the NCF board are Jerry Regosin, who is working on creating business relationships and Christine Liu (sp?), an engineer that is now doing communications and ‘branding.’

Construction of the expanded greenhouse will begin next week.

L. Mottard asked if documentation of the shed had already been done. Becka passed around pictures that were used for the presentation to the Historic Commission for its review of the shed, and provided a copy to Anne for the files.

### **General Business & Announcements**

#### *Contract with Newton Community Farm*

L. Bruyn asked what was stated previously. J. Harper read from the February minutes regarding the discussion. L. asked what are the advantages and disadvantages for a 20-year contract, with review every 5 years versus a 5-year contract, renewable up to 20 years. Response: the longer contract allows for major projects that require major donations and long-term planning and improvements. Another proposed change is to have a 90-day period to cure a “fault” or problem, rather than the current 45-day period. The existing contract provides a 3-year term, which the NFC voted to extend for 2 years. Ouida Young suggested a new 5-year contract to be extended 3 times up to a maximum of 20 years. D. Lang asked if a 5-year contract would be acceptable for the NFC. G. Rubin said he personally would not donate, and he believes it will deter major donations if the donors do not have the confidence a long-term contract allows. L. Bruyn said she thought the NFC was considering a 20-year contract to be evaluated at 5-yr intervals. G. Rubin is afraid a new administration could come in after 5 years and change the use of the farm. NFC does not want that insecurity. J. Harper said the next step, if NFC approves the recommendations of the sub-committee, is a motion to approve the changes. **Motion by D. Lang to have O. Young draft language consistent with the January 19<sup>th</sup> email summary of the sub-committee’s recommendations for changes to the contract. Second by L. Mottard. Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.**

#### *Pullet shed & greenhouse –report re Historic review*

Anne brought the Record of Action from the Historical Commission and passed out copies. D. Lang made the presentation to the Historical Commission and asked that their motion reflect the motion approved by the NFC. However, the Historical Commission’s motion was not quite the same wording. D. Lang asked if there is a time limit for re-building of the shed – what if the shed is not re-built within one year? The motion by the NFC was to do plans within one year, not necessarily to re-build. D. Lang suggests they re-visit the topic, and consider re-wording the motion to allow re-construction within two years (instead of one) and building a larger building.

#### *February Minutes for approval*

**Motion by V. Schnell and second by D. Lang to approve minutes as amended. Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.**

### **Miscellaneous**

*MA Ag Commissions Conference- Jan 23-24* – report L. Mottard picked up materials but was out of town and could not attend.

V. Schnell requested agenda item for future meeting. She would like to have another discussion about what everyone’s vision for the farm is. R. Shul said most groups have a “vision statement.” J. Harper said the NFC has the ordinance, and the Commission could ‘flesh’ out the stated goals. He said the business Plan also speaks to the farm’s vision. The Community Farm may do more on that than the NFC.

D. Lang wants agenda item regarding accessibility. P. Barrer is on the May agenda for the Mayor's Commission on Accessibility. R. Smillie contacts Greg whenever someone with special access problems inquires about a class. Greg goes to P. Barrer who determines how best to meet the needs of the attendee.

**Motion by L. Bruyn to adjourn. Second by R. Shul. Vote: All approved. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Phelps, Sr. Environmental Planner