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DRAFT

NEWTON FARM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

June 4, 2009
7:00 pm at City Hall
Rm 209

Meeting opened at 7:00 p.m. with the following attendees:

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Harper, Chair, P. Lewenberg, L. Mottard, J. Hepburn, L. Bruyn, V. Schnell, Lee Mottard

MEMBERS ABSENT: R. Shoul, D. Lang, R. Lipof

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Gene Rubin, representative NCF, Peter Barrer, representative, NCF

Staff Anne Phelps introduced Alexandra Ananth, Sr. Planner in the Planning and Development Department, as the new staff for the Commission. Anne will continue to serve as backup for the Commission. The Commission expressed its thanks to Anne for her service over the past few years.

Newton Community Farm Inc. Report

Report on Farm Operation/Barn update – The barn door is installed! Peter Barrer reported that the fields are 2/3 planted with the first wave of crops and that the first pick-up would begin next week. The 4 new beehives are doing well but that there are more bugs (pests) on the farm than last year. The Seedling Sale was a huge success and the farm sold out of seedlings during the sale. Peter introduced Sam Fogel who has been helping the Farm with their fruit trees including planting fruit trees on the Farm and teaching classes on how fruit trees are now more accessible than ever. Next year the first crop of apples is expected and he is hoping to train people to manage the trees. He noted that caterpillars have heavily hit many of the fruit trees planted along Winchester.

P. Barrer mentioned that some members of NCF had met with the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities and that they might be able to help with funding sources for the planned accessible raised beds.

He noted that Lucy Caldwell-Stair gave a tour of the farm with a focus on its history and that Greg had recently spoken at an event in West Roxbury as well. Peter also mentioned that he had spoken as part of a panel in Lexington regarding Busa Farm where some would like it to remain a farm and some would like soccer fields in its place. Another tour is scheduled for July 25 with two walks that day, one at 10 and one at 2PM.

Newton Farm Commission

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Education classes are continuing and they have hired a part time education coordinator who will be helping with a summer camp program for middle school aged children at Nahanton Park. Peter mentioned that the Farm is still interested in exploring the possibility of farming at the Kennard Estate/Park and Lee Mottard said he would bring it up at the next Parks and Recreation meeting. Staff is to get a map of the park from the Engineering Department in order to determine which portions of the Park belong to Parks and Rec. vs. the Conservation Commission.

There was a brief continuance of last meeting's discussion of what to call farm contributors and it was noted that both the Historical Society and the Newton Conservators both have members. Peter Lewenberg noted that the WGBH Membership Guidelines might be a good model to look at. Peter Lewenberg also asked about the healthiness of the Board and the care and feeding of Greg Maslow. Peter Barrer reported that everyone on the Board works hard and they have lots of volunteers (19 helped with the seedling sale). Greg seems happy and that they have been able to offer him retirement benefits.

Judy Hepburn mentioned a recent Boston globe article that mentioned a café in Jamaica Plain that was advertising Angino Farm asparagus. The Commission asked to know what percent of sales are commercial for the next meeting.

There was a motion to approve the minutes which was seconded and the minutes were approved 6-0-1 with Lee Mottard abstaining.

The Commission discussed the summer meeting schedule and it was decided that the August meeting would be on the farm and that the July meeting would be used by the Subcommittee to discuss the CPA funding application for interior work to the Barn. James Harper and Lee Mottard said they would help with the application.

The Commission noted that they would like action on the contract and that staff should talk with Ouida to find out when she thinks she will have time to work on it.

Judy Hepburn said she would try to reach out to Lucy to discuss her interest in the Commission. Vaunita moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra Ananth, Sr. Planner