



David B. Cohen  
Mayor

# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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## NEWTON FARM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

April 2, 2009

7:00 pm at City Hall

Rm 209

Meeting opened at 7:20 p.m. with the following attendees:

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** J. Harper, Chair, J. Hepburn, L. Bruyn, V. Schnell, and R. Lipof.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** P. Lewenberg, R. Shoul, D. Lang, L. Mottard

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

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

*Report on Farm Operation/Barn update* – Peter Barrer reported that Greg is putting seeds in flats for the seedling sale and for the garden. The greenhouse extension is still in progress; warm day is needed to move the end wall and cover the new area. The pullet shed was dismantled. The wood from the shed was not saved, and discussion followed about whether or not there had been direction to save the wood. P. Barrer reported that the education program is ramping up for the year and the NCF has advertised for a coordinator. J. Hepburn raised a concern about whether the requirement to have a membership to be eligible for a CSA is exclusive and asked how the NCF saw itself as being able to serve all of Newton. P. Barrer said the CSA model is used for income and the farm's ability to budget and plan for the future. The population of Newton is about 85,000. Offering memberships allows the farm to serve many more people than the few who subscribe to the CS. L. Bruyn expressed a concern that the cost of the membership fee plus the CSA price seems to raise the cost of the CSA to a high level. P. Barrer said the proposed membership fee is \$35 for individuals and \$55 for families. L. Bruyn thinks someone should not have to pay \$35 in order to then pay the additional cost of a CSA. G. Rubin said the Aldermen (during discussion of the enabling ordinance) thought of CSAs were 'elitist.' Further discussion of 'why have memberships' followed. J. Hepburn also urged the NCF not to have a "members only" event as part of the fall festival.

### **General Business & Announcements**

*Contract with Newton Community Farm (and see minutes for March 2009)*

J. Harper asked that the minutes incorporate the following language in support of an extended contract, "In order to carry out the purposes of the ordinance, particularly its educational component, the farm group needs to undertake long-term improvements to the barn. The city, not the farm group, owns these improvements. The farm group is asking that the contract term take into account the nature of its investment in the city's property."

**Newton Farm Commission**

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He asked how the contract was coming. Staff reported that O. Young had not provided anything new for the meeting. R. Lipof will call O. Young to see if she needs more information. The Farm Commission is also exploring the possibility of using the Kennard Estate for expansion of farm activities, and using some of the community garden plots at Nahanton Park.

*Scheduling a "Vision" discussion/developing a vision statement? – V. Schnell* said the first year of the Farm Commission there was a lot of discussion of everyone's ideas for the farm, but, she said there had been little discussion after that. She thinks it would be good to discuss the proposed expansion, educational component, and other proposed plans. The farm has "growing pains" and the Farm Commission members should take the opportunity to discuss their ideas about the farm. She hopes for a "common vision." A subgroup could be formed, but it should be almost all of the commission members. R. Lipoff said he wanted to have a "mission statement" for his child. As preparation to discussion of this topic at the next meeting, staff will send out a copy of the Ordinance.

*Accessibility of classes – Peter B. & Don L.?*

Don is not here so postpone discussion until next meeting. P. Barrer said the NCF has the desire to be accessible to all. Some members of the NCF are meeting with the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities on May 18<sup>th</sup> – time and place will be reported later.

*March Minutes for approval*

**Motion by R. Lipof to approve March minutes with corrections. V. Schnell seconded. Vote: J. Hepburn abstained. J. Harper, L. Bruyn, V. Schnell, and R. Lipof voted "aye." Motion passed.**

#### **Miscellaneous**

P. Barrer reminded all that May 17<sup>th</sup> is the Seedling Sale.

**Motion by L. Bruyn to adjourn. Second by J. Harper. Vote: All in favor. Motion passed.**

Meeting closed 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Phelps, Sr. Environmental Planner

