

TOWN OF LUNENBURG
Office of the Planning Board

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Kenneth Chenis, Clerk
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Minutes
April 10, 2018

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Meeting Posted: Yes
Place: Town Hall, 17 Main Street, Lunenburg, MA
Time: 8:00 PM

APR 25 2018

LUNENBURG TOWN
CLERK OFFICE

Present: Gregory Bittner, Matthew Allison, Kenneth Chenis, Adam R. Burney

Absent: Michael-Ray Jeffreys, David Prokowiew

Also Present: Agricultural Commission members Jeffrey Mendoza, Ryan Stober, Ashley Steele, and Arthur Snow; Farmers' Market Manager Heather Bowen; Select Board members Jamie Toale, Phyllis Luck, Damon McQuaid, Robert Ebersole, Paula Bertram.

Meeting was a joint session on economic development for agriculture in Lunenburg.

Agricultural Commission (Ag Com) Chair, Jeffrey Mendoza- noted that the proprietor at the Dragonfly Café is providing counter and retail space for farmers to set up on weekends. The proprietor is also willing to provide indoor space for the Farmers' Market in the event of inclement weather.

Heather Bowen- she was contacted by NewVue Communities, Fitchburg, MA. It has a USDA Grant to help small businesses/farms, and would like to attend both an Ag Com and a Select Board meeting.

Paula Bertram- (speaking as a citizen) feels that Town Hall should be considered for a year-round indoor farmers' market and art collaborative; also the cafeteria at TC Passios for a farmers' collaborative. She noted the availability of various grants, e.g., Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for downtown/area revitalization. She opined there needs to be a core group to work on these grants and work with the farmers.

J. Mendoza- noted that direct contact with the farmers usually occurs during the Farmers' Market.

R. Stober- stated it's important to preserve the open space in Lunenburg; that's why people move to Town.

A. Snow- opined that agri-tourism can make a lot of money for Lunenburg.

R. Ebersole- what does economic development need to do to support both small and large farms?

P. Bertram- of the opinion that if a collaborative co-op is done, people would be drawn to it.

A. Burney- would the larger farms see a benefit to participating in such a collaborative? With participation from larger farms, it might give the necessary boost to such a collaborative.

K. Chenis- inquired if anyone has approached Stillman Farms about becoming a co-op, asserting if you have a bigger draw you gain more customers.

J. Toale- who is going to be the driving force behind moving forward with economic development, e.g., an economic development committee, a farm market committee, a group of professionals, etc.? Who is going to get us from "where we are now to who 'we' want to be".

P. Bertram- the Town Manager has previously suggested appointing an economic development committee. That committee could do outreach to the farmers. If the farmers aren't interested, this will not go anywhere.

D. McQuaid- the individuals selling the goods should be the ones forming the co-op.

A. Burney- in agreement with an economic development committee, which can also take into consideration the Town buildings. Is there public interest in a co-op? He feels the Ag Com needs to start that discussion with an economic development committee.

J. Toale- the Town Manager suggested the following for an economic development committee. One member each from the Ag Com, Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, Planning Board, Select Board, and two citizens-at-large.

R. Ebersole- suggested possibly a sub-committee that would be focused on agriculture working in conjunction with an economic development committee.

M. Allison- noted there is an M.G.L. for the Ag Com to hold agricultural land. He went on to note that the Town needs to lessen its farm size requirement.

J. Toale- the creation of an economic development committee will be an agenda item for the Select Board; they will also give it a charge.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:15 PM.