

**Agricultural Commission
April 21, 2009**



Meeting in room 104, 2 Jabish St., Lawrence Memorial Hall

Member present: G. Adzima, J. Gillan
Associate Members: S. Gay, D. Beaudette

Absent Members: J. Clements, H. Guardenier, J. Gillan, R. Reidy, A. Page, W. Shattuck

As there are only two voting members, this meeting was informational. The two members signed off on a few bills, one of which was for Turley Publication hearing notice.

Minutes of the March meeting will be voted on at the May meeting.

Grace said there are scheduled get togethers: May 2, 2009 with Jared from Stone Soup for vegetable gardens on a small scale; May 16, 2009 with the Western Mass Gardeners; and, the first week in June 2009, Hope will have a kids garden talk at New England Small Farm Institute.

7:30 pm -- The AgComm has an appointment with the Board of Selectmen for a public hearing on the Right to Farm Bylaw. The members present went over to the Board of Selectmen meeting.

The Board of Selectmen read the bylaw and asked questions regarding it. The first page had one repeated line under Definitions, which will be taken out. Dan Beaudette has put this together and made copies for anyone to take and review. After Grace told the Selectmen and audience why the AgComm is proposing this bylaw, Dan went over issues.

Dan noted how this bylaw is separate from land use and will enhance and support farming in the Town of Belchertown. This bylaw will be brought to the May Annual Town Meeting by the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen voted to support this bylaw. The AgComm members returned to their regularly scheduled meeting in room 104.

Discussed new trench guidelines and how it affects everyone, including farming, for physical safety reasons. Dan mentioned this was included in one of the bi-monthly Farm and Market Reports sent to AgComm members.

Discussed a questionnaire that Grace had from the State. They are asking what agriculture committees may need or want, including legal advice, funding, information, etc. She noted items and will send it back, as it is due by May 15, 2009.

Brought up the chicken swap and that it was cancelled. There are regulations that people cannot swap chickens, as it can be a health issue.

Brought up the Town Fair and if anyone had suggestions for the AgComm involvement.

Noted the Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2009 and the Right to Farm Bylaw will be on the warrant.

Noted May 28, 2009 will be the first farmer market.

May 19, 2009 is the next meeting date for the AgComm. The budget will be reviewed at this meeting.

Adjourn 9 pm. Minutes submitted by S. Gay