



Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

**City of Newton, Massachusetts**  
Department of Planning and Development  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone  
(617) 796-1120  
Telefax  
(617) 796-1142  
TDD/TTY  
(617) 796-1089  
[www.newtonma.gov](http://www.newtonma.gov)

Barney S. Heath  
Director

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**NEWTON FARM COMMISSION**  
MEETING MINUTES  
May 5, 2022

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Meeting opened at 7:03 p.m. with the following attendees

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Michael Goldman, Jim Harper, Beth Wilkinson, Lori Yarvis, Cheryl Lappin, Patrick Costello

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Vaunita Schnell and Jeffrey Zabel

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Sue Bottino (Executive Director), Paul Holt (Board President), Dede Vittori (Co-President and Board Clerk)

**STAFF:** Heather Zaring & Brenda Belsanti, Planning & Development Department

• **Farm Operations and Q1 Financial Review**

- CSA sold out all 80 shares.
- New hires: Asst. Grower, High School Intern Supervisor, and Farm Stand/Field Crew – we are fully staffed
- We have 10 high school interns and we have committed to 7 of them so far
- The pick-up truck was a total loss in a black ice accident – it did not have collision insurance due to its age and mileage
- Field – planting carrots, beans, leeks, broccoli, onions, chard and harvesting – chard. Changed the variety of broccoli to a more resilient one that harvests earlier
- Board has grown by three new members.
- Participating in Newton Art in Bloom in the Fall
- Commercial refrigerator broke. Repair was the same as replace so we replaced. Replacement cost was approximately \$4,000. This was done in April, so it is not on the Q1 reporting
- Staff participated in Uprooting Racism Training. We are working on our equity statement and short- & long-term goals.
- The Q1 numbers don't mean much yet because it's the slowest time of year

• **Fundraising**

- Awarded a grant from MDAR – most equipment has been purchased. It will be finalized by June

- Grant from State Department of Agriculture & Energy Office of \$22k to for HVAC in both greenhouses and installing gas. We have until next summer to complete
  - Corporate Volunteering Program – Wegmans has done 1 of 3 volunteer visits. Cost is \$500 for up to six people to do farm work
  - Spring appeal – not a large response yet, but our goal of 1 new major donor was met -- \$5k. We will be reaching out to our other donors
- **Education Operations & Other Activities (Seedling Sale)**
    - Seedling sale May 14 & 15 12:00-5:00. A record 27,000 seedlings. Volunteers needed
    - Doing a menu of options to choose from for organizations/schools that want to work with us
    - Matt, Director of Education, has visited the JCC, Solomon Schechter Day School, Newton Housing Authority and Newton Neighbors Helping Neighbors to start pollinator gardens and work with seniors that need help
    - Seed has been planted with different pre-schools to do some pre-school programs
    - Countryside Elementary possible field trip in the fall
    - Burr School – school garden
    - Roslindale Farmers Market – education for kids this summer
    - Beethoven School in Boston to have possible program there
    - We have reached out to several private schools
    - Readying the Learning Garden – new composting system, pollinator garden, etc.
    - Hired and Assistant Garden Educator for the summer – Tomako Deeney – she is also docent at the Arnold Arboretum
    - Cancellation of spring break classes due to instructor COVID illness – refunds made to all 12 students
    - Education displays around town – library and bank
    - Earth Day Festival drew a large crowd
    - YMCA Healthy Kids Fair – May 6 & 7
    - Adult Programming – mushroom growing class and cooking classes
    - Summer enrollment is down, but looking at different marketing strategies to increase enrollment
    - Produce Donation Program – Donated \$12k worth of produce LY. This year we have had a commitment of \$3k. Hoping to receive more funds to underwrite the program. \$2500 from Brookline Bank. Don't normally have excess produce, but restaurant purchasing demand has been down the last two years and we are using that surplus for donation
    - Newton Food Pantry – received a list from them to grow needed, culturally relevant crops for donation
- **New Greenhouse Installation**
    - Attempted to hire an outside company, but none were available until the end of the year so we will be doing it ourselves. Installing the exterior plastic May 6<sup>th</sup> and the utilities will be put in place to heat and ventilate.

- **CPA Grant & Update**

- City Council still needs to vote on it
- Setting up meeting with facilities to start the project
- \$88k used for basement water issue, replace HVAC, electrical replacement, kitchen ceiling replacement
- May need to set aside a bit to house the family if needed
- Roof replacement has already been completed because it was an emergency

- **Solar Installation Update**

- Solar Grant – received extension for another year due to supply chain issues for the battery
- NHC approved it. Finance accepted the grant plus \$20k from city's Energy Stabilization Fund. City Council approved
- Resonant Energy will be the project manager
- There is a bid out for a contractor

- **Meeting Minutes from February 3, 2022**

A motion was made to approve of minutes by Beth Wilkinson. This motion was duly seconded by Jim Harper. This motion passed 6-0.

- **Traffic Issues**

- Nahanton Street traffic – more large trucks since the redo of the I-95 exchange by Muzi Ford. Issues include – noise from jake brakes, increased beeping/honking, accidents, running of red lights, construction/Brookline dump runs. It is often the same trucks. Police details have been ticketing but can't be here all of the time.
- Inquiries regarding MA & Newton jake brake laws for signage, MA & Newton noise ordinances, limiting size/weight of trucks, re-routing trucks
- Reach out to Traffic Council to see if traffic study can be done
- Reach out to ISD to see if construction is staying within permitted noise allowance

- **Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Jim Harper. This motion was duly seconded by Lori Yarvis. This motion passed 6-0.

Meeting adjourned 7:51 p.m.

Next meeting – **August 4, 2022.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Brenda Belsanti, Staff