



Ruthanne Fuller  
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Barney S. Heath  
Director

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**NEWTON FARM COMMISSION**  
MEETING MINUTES  
May 2, 2024.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Meeting opened at 7:10 p.m. with the following attendees

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jefferey Zabel, Patrick Costello, Lori Yarvis, Jim Harper, Beth Wilkinson, Cheryl Lappin, and John Rice

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Michael Goldman

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Allyson MacKenna (Executive Director), Paul Holt (Co-President), Dede Vittori (Co-President), and Barbara Seal (Co-Treasurer), Madelyn Sorensen (Co-Treasurer), Linda Chafets (Board Member)

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

● **Farm & Field Operations**

- The farm looks beautiful and everything is growing.
- Andrea Egan is the new, full-time farm manager and has been working alongside Greg.
- Hired an assistant growing Jeff Brish who started as part-time and is now full-time and is experienced in sustainable agriculture.
- Sold out of the summer CSA which took a bit longer than previous years. Other farms are also having a slow down since COVID ending.
- We have stone fruit this year for the fruit share with Autumn Hill Orchards. Opened the fruit share four months earlier this year to boost sales.
- Quarterly meetings with Eastern Community Farms Group sharing ideas and best practices.
- Participating in Chamber of Commerce meetings.
- Greg was involved in Sustainability Week with The Boston Globe which was recorded.
- Met with the new Executive Director of the Food Pantry.
- Village Bank's Sue Chapman is due to visit the farm for a tour May 21<sup>st</sup>.

● **Financials Q1, 2024**

- The Q1, 2024 Report was presented and discussed.

● **Educational Programming**

- Very successful presentation on Sunday about owls with Norman Smith from Audubon Society and he was able to bring an owl he was rehabbing.
  - Display at the Newton Public Library from April 1 – May 31.
  - Participated in Newton’s Earth Day.
  - Children’s program at the library in June.
  - Tour program is coming along and we are doing testing to launch next summer.
  - High school field group internships again this summer. Eight spots total – four for each two-week session. It’s three mornings per week.
  - Continuing to be a part of NWH Nutrition Security and Equity Community Group.
- **Buildings & Other Capital Needs Planning & Grant Activity**
    - Awaiting news on several grants including Pomroy Foundation Grant and Amelia Peabody Grant, and supermarket grants.
    - Did not get MDAR Grant for the vacuum seeder but was told they had received a record number of applications and only able to give to about 20% of them.
    - Many grants were COVID money and the competition has been fierce.
    - One greenhouse had an issue with the thermostat that has been resolved.
    - Solar – energy usage Q1, 2023 for the barn was \$679 and Q1, 2024 it was a \$346 credit. That was winter season with no sun.
    - Routine annual inspections – passed backflow test, alarm testing, and dry valve trip system testing which passed but some parts replaced due to wear and tear.
    - Annual building inspection pending.
    - Fire extinguisher inspection in July and we may need to add some extinguishers.
    - Working with the CPC for rotting deck.
    - The beaver situation – Councilor Farrell is working on it due to flooding concerns.
    - The new development across the street impacting the farm with shadow issues.
- **Seedling Sale**
    - Gearing up for the seedling sale.
    - Signs have been places in public areas.
    - In need of volunteers for the sale.
- **Meeting Minutes from February 1, 2024**
    - A motion was made to approve of minutes by Jim Harper. This motion was duly seconded by Jefferey Zabel. This motion passed 5-0.
- **Adjournment**
    - A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Jefferey Zabel. This motion was duly seconded by Cheryl Lappin. This motion passed 5-0.

Meeting adjourned 7:45 p.m.

Next meeting – **August 1, 2024.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Brenda Belsanti, Staff

