

Sheffield Agricultural Commission
October 5, 2022 - APPROVED

Present: Jim Kelly, Kathy Orlando, Bob Kilmer, Amelia Conklin, and Ricky McLoughlin

The meeting was called to order at 7:21 pm.

Minutes:

Minutes from 8/17/22 meeting were approved as amended.

Brochure:

Jim K. has begun research on the agroforestry piece of the brochure, including researching Sheffield's existing forest management plans and tallying total forest acres, as well as acres cut and volume of timber harvested. Ricky M. is waiting to hear back from one dairy farm, otherwise he has collected information regarding average pounds per milk per year produced in Sheffield. Kathy O. and Amelia C. are still working on collecting information: Kathy O. is looking at total acreage used for agricultural production as well as total number of farms. Amelia C. is collecting photos for potential use in the brochure. Discussion ensued regarding the definition of farm – do homesteads count as farms? The committee decided that yes, they do, especially if whether they're included or not will not influence the data by a large degree. Kathy O. will also do research regarding the economic impact of farming in Sheffield, as well as reconnecting with the graphic designer. Partner organizations will be listed on the back and will be brainstormed collectively further along in the brochure creation process.

Treasurer's Report:

\$500 remains in the FY '22-'23 budget. Some Right-to-Farm signs need to be added or replaced. Jim K. requests that commission members count how many are needed, and he will check the inventory of existing signs before ordering new ones.

Misc.:

Amelia C. will reach out to Cassie Keeley, Sheffield's animal control officer, in order to develop a rapport in case future collaboration is needed.

Local agriculture:

Bob K. was able to get the name of the company selling biosolids as crop fertilizer in Sheffield. Amelia C. spoke with Jennifer Wood at Mass DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) who is the lead person working on PFAS testing for biosolids for the state. She shared the database she compiled, as well as specific results for Sheffield. Ag Com members had questions regarding if a batch number could be traced to the product applied, and why some companies that are listed as being used are not in the database. The main question surfaced: Is there a way to determine if the applied material was contaminated? And if contaminated, to what extent? Amelia C. will also follow up with Jennifer to see if independent soil testing can be conducted to determine the presence/absence of PFAS. Jennifer recommended that the Sheffield Ag Com request to become a stakeholder in the state discussion on PFAS. Amelia C. will investigate what is required of stakeholders and report back at next meeting.

Mail: A copy of Ricky M.'s acceptance letter was in the Ag Com inbox and was reviewed.

The next meeting will be held November 9 at 7 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Amelia Conklin