

Sheffield Agricultural Commission  
August 10, 2021 – APPROVED

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm.

Minutes:

The minutes from the 5/15/20, 5/27/21, and 6/15/21 meetings were accepted as amended. The minutes from the 7/16/20 meeting will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Mail:

Bob K.'s reappointment letter dated 6/24/21 was received.

Brochure:

Kathy O. will email the list of farms who have not replied to the brochure survey.

Role of the Ag Com in reviewing Board of Health regulations:

Bob K. spoke with selectman Martin Mitsoff regarding the new law. A follow up meeting or conversation with the Board of Health is necessary to discuss the 45-day review process and ensure that the board is aware of the law. Jim K. will attend the next Board of Health meeting on Monday, September 13. Jim K. will take a copy of the law to the meeting.

Treasurer report:

Budget ideas for the 2021-22 fiscal year include brochure work and printing and supporting the farmers market in 2022. Ag Com members are encouraged to bring new ideas to the table for the next meeting.

Locally important soils project:

Al Averill has identified multiple soil types and locations that are being used for agriculture in Sheffield that were not identified as important for agriculture previously. Averill had specific questions regarding the current and historic agricultural use of various parcels in Sheffield. The Ag Com reviewed the questions and provided answers for each. More accurately identifying locally important soils makes more farmers and landowners eligible for government funding programs and resources that are designated for prime farmland. Amelia C. and Jim K. will report back regarding the parcels near their homes.

New appointments:

Amelia C. will ask Ian Allen and Anna Mack. Bob K. will ask Ricky McLoughlin. Jim K. will ask Holly Aragi if she would like to request re-appointment.

Local agricultural issues:

The issue of PFAs has recently come to the attention of the MA Dairy Association. They were also recently on the agenda of the Sheffield Board of Health, as well. There is a Sheffield farm using biosolids as fertilizer. The commission discussed that PFA contamination on dairy farms had been an issue in other states, so it would be good for the farm to request a report from the biosolids provider regarding PFAs in its products. The commission will send a letter to the identified farm to provide counsel and notify the farm that the issue has come to the attention of the Board of Health. Amelia C. will draft the letter. Kathy O. will edit.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 14 at 7 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amelia Conklin