

Sheffield Agricultural Commission
April 29, 2019 – Approved

Present: Jim Kelly, Amelia Conklin, Kathy Orlando, Holly Aragi, Bob Kilmer, Jim Larkin (joined partway through)

Attending from the community: Erna Lampman, Peter and Melissa Martin

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 pm.

Approval of minutes:

The minutes from the 9/26/18 meeting were approved as amended.

The minutes from the 11/7/18 meeting were approved as presented.

Commission roles:

The following roles were unanimously approved by Ag Com members present:

Chair – Jim Kelly

Vice Chair – Jim Larkin

Treasurer – Kathy Orlando

Secretary – Amelia Conklin

Budget review:

Pending review, this year's full budget of \$1,000 is available for spending by 6/30/19. Kathy Orlando will confirm this with town hall.

Brochure:

The letter to farmers and list of farmers was reviewed. Holly suggested adding the town seal to the questionnaire to add legitimacy and importance to the notice. The letter was discussed. Kathy will send a revised version of the letter by 5/25/19.

Meeting schedule:

Members agreed to meet the last Thursday of every month at noon throughout the summer:

5/30/19

6/27/19

7/25/19

8/29/19

Essay contest:

The scope of the contest was discussed at length. It was decided that a 1,000-1,500 word essay contest asking young people about the importance of agriculture in our community would be announced for high students via a flier distributed to all students at Mt. Everett Regional High School. Cash prizes would be awarded as follows: \$200 first place, \$100 second place, and \$50 third place. Amelia Conklin will send Holly Aragi the necessary language which states that the contest is not sponsored by the school. The language of the flier Holly presented was reviewed and edited.

Pollinators and honey bees:

Melissa and Peter Martin were present from the community to discuss the possibility of the Ag Com supporting a non-binding warrant that would name Sheffield as a pollinator friendly town. The main purpose of the initiative is to raise awareness among townspeople about pollinators. Egremont and Great

Barrington have already adopted the policy. They will follow up with more information and a copy of the warrant language.

Mail:

A letter from Robert Krol was reviewed. He will no longer pursue the dispute with his neighbor regarding their horses as the neighbors are moving the horses to another location.

Farm practices:

The recent concern in town regarding glyphosate in public drinking water was discussed. Jim Kelly wanted the Ag Com to be aware of the issue and attend the next meeting on the topic. It was determined that a follow up meeting about glyphosate was not going to happen. Jim urged all farmers to have a proper nutrient management plan in place to avoid actual and perceived problems regarding drinking water safety.

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Amelia Conklin