

Harvard Agricultural Advisory Commission (HAAC)

Town of Harvard, MA

Minutes of Meeting April 27, 2022

Approved October 27, 2022

Present: Kerri Green - Chair, Matt Varrell, Frank Carlson, Rob Traver (joined late)

Green called the meeting to order 7:07pm

Review/Approve Minutes

Green asked to pass over approving minutes due to the fact that she did not have a chance to tend to minutes like she anticipated.

Finalize Chapter 61A Letter/Google Form

Green also asked to pass over this item due to commission member Turnheim not able to attend this evening due to a personal matter. She has been the one that was overseeing the drafting of the letter and 61A info collection, and she has the current draft and list documents that were to be reviewed.

Harvard Grown

Green reviewed the importance of creating content on harvardgrown.org to post in advance. She understands she didn't send a reminder over the past month to members to be tending to this.

Right to Farm Signs

Green has been in touch with a company in Bridgewater that the DPW uses for the production of all roadway signs. Green shared a few photo samples of the Harvard Grown logo via screen share and explained the difference between the two. One was made out of a reflective material and the other was not. The difference would be that the colors render differently, particularly the white. Members noted the reflective didn't really detract from the colors, and as long as the cost for reflective wasn't more we could do the reflective.

In regards to size options DPW instructed to stick with a 18x24 constraint because the signs would be going on the right of way. VisiFlash provided some options and pricing within those constraints

- 16 in rounds (left over from another job and available) \$35 each
- 18 in round (not a stock size and would need to be cut) \$80 each
- 18in square \$27 each
- 24in square with an 18in graphic would be \$48 each

Green shared a map with placement locations she drafted as to how many would need to be ordered. Varrell asked if we would be adding “Harvard is a right to Farm Community” Members agreed that would also need to be included. Members discussed options that would allow that application - Green asked if we should be 1. changing the logo to have the Right to Farm language included, or if we should be on peripheral 2. if we did a round with a rectangular sign below like Groton has. Varrell also reminded of his suggestion to allow farms to purchase a directional sign below.

Traver had in his possession the old RTF signs and the language on it was Harvard “A Right to Farm Community” measurements were 14x20 - which fell between the 18x24 limit.

Locations would be at entry points totalling - 7

Interior locations with opportunity for directional to various farms that opted to participate should SB approve - 6

- off rte. 2 in either direction
- top of Oak Hill
- near Old Mill Rd
- East Bare Hill & Bolton Road Intersection
- Prospect Hill off Still River

Members agreed with 18” round and 18x6 rectangle below with “a Right to Farm Community” Green said she would email SB liaison Erin McBee and Julie Doucet at town hall about getting on an upcoming SB agenda to get approval on placement and signs. Green would follow up with confirmation once she learns of a date/time.

Open Space Conservation Initiates

- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
- Designation of Farmland of Local Importance
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Green asked Carlson about the Regional Conservation Opportunities and if they had been discussed at the Open Space Meetings - he reported that they hadn’t really but there was something else he felt he was supposed to report to the Commission but he didn’t have his notes in front of him.

Green reviewed the criteria which needed to be met for this USDA funded RCPP opportunity, one being that 50% of soils needed to be of farmland soils of significant importance. The program is similar to APR, but less restrictive, and the restriction would be held by a town entity. The question posed was if the Commission supported the idea to encourage the OSC to potentially determine which parcels might meet the criteria for this program and so OSC could let property owners know of the program. The caveat for the program is that it needs to be initiated by the property owner. Green asked if the Commission wanted to let the OSC know they

support the initiative and that if they want to look at potential parcels that might qualify under the criteria then the Commission could then reach out to those property owners letting them know of the program - Carlson said the Commission should table it for now and that he would report to OSC that we support the initiative but that it was best to see how they want to proceed in regards to this program. Carlson said the conversation at the past OSC meeting got a little contentious about sending letters to land owners about what they should do with their land.

Member Updates

Carlson had no other updates on OSC.

Chair Update

Farmland Action Plan Listening Session 5/3/22 6:00pm in Spanish hosted by MDAR

Discussion Items for May Meeting

- Sign update following a meeting with SB
- 61A letter
- Harvard Grown content

Adjourn

Carlson made a motion to adjourn Traver seconded. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned 8:27pm.

Submitted by: K. Green