**Franklin Agricultural Commission**

 **Meeting Minutes from February 28, 2022**

 **(Meeting held Virtually Due to Covid-19 Risk)**

 **In Attendance:** Members Present**:** *Roger Trahan, CJ Koshivas, Nick Hoffman, Nick Capoccia, and Marian Szymanski. Also present – Mel Hamblin.*

 1. **Opening:**

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm pm by Roger Trahan.
2. Roll Call: Five members of the Franklin Agricultural Commission were present.
3. Approval of the Minutes: The Minutes from the 1/31/22 were approved.

 **2. Old Business:**

 A. Chapter 61 Properties- The Franklin Agricultural Commission has been informed that there exists a common misconception that if a property owner places their land under Chapter 61, then the Town of Franklin has the right/ability to take this property. The Commission decided that we must address this unfounded belief and carefully explain what, “the first right of refusal” actually means. Marian S. will re-write the cover letter that will accompany the Chapter 61 educational materials, so that we can address any misconceptions and/or confusion. Mel H. suggested that we attach a survey in our educational packet asking for feedback.

 B. Agricultural Workshops- Mel H. has taped a cable television show about seed-starting and pumpkin growing. CJ will soon begin pruning his fruit trees and will record his work. On April 23 we will create/refresh our pollinator pasture. We hope to film this effort and show it on our local cable television channel. Roger has offered to film a demonstration of how he installs his packages of honey bees.

 **3. New Business:**

 A. 2022 Summer Farmer’s Market The Franklin Farmer’s Market will have a SNAP booth at the market. Customers will be able to swipe their EBT cards and receive tokens which they can use to purchase produce, eggs, and meat at the market. The market’s organizers are in conversation with local businesses to increase the funds available to customers paying with EBT cards.

 B. Refugees From Afghanistan- A member of the Franklin Agricultural Commission, Marian S., is part of a NST that is assisting a family from Afghanistan to relocate here in Franklin. Marian attended a NOFA workshop in January that discussed the many benefits of vegetable growing for people who suffer from PTSD. In particular, growing food that comes from the refugee’s homeland can be especially healing. The Franklin Agricultural Commission has decided to work with this family to grow an assortment of tomatoes and peppers plants that originate in Afghanistan.

 The meeting was adjourned by C.J. and Marian at 7:59pm.

 Minutes submitted by Marian Szymanski