**Franklin Agricultural Commission**

**Meeting Minutes from October 25, 2021**

**Municipal Building 355 East Central Street**

**In Attendance:** Members Present**:** *Roger Trahan, Nick Hoffman, Marian Szymanski, CJ Koshivas, and Linda Noel. Jamie Hellen (Google-Meets), Mel Hamblin, Jeff Perry, and Alan Earls were also present.*

1. **Opening:**

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm 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 9/27/21 were approved.

**2. New Business:**

A. Franklin APR Property- Jamie Hellen joined our meeting, remotely, to discuss a possible land purchase by the Town of Franklin. There are two parcels of property available, both with APRs on them. Both are 61A properties and are connected to the town forest. The properties currently have a Forest Management Plan.

For a town to gain an APR property, MDAR must be involved. And in order for the town to sub-divide the properties, the town must petition the State for approval. This is unprecedented. Municipalities have never purchased and sub-divided APR land. MDAR will want to see as much of these properties remain in agricultural use as possible. The town of Franklin must demonstrate that they will keep much of the land in production. We discussed the possibilities of a farm school, community gardens, pollinator pastures, and leasing land to local farmers. The Agricultural Commission would be involved in the organization of such land uses. The Commission agreed to put this topic on our Agenda for our November meeting. Everyone on the Commission will come to the meeting with ideas and suggestions.

B. Town Grant for 61 Outreach- The Commission is interested in the possibility of applying for and obtaining a grant to pay for the costs of our 2022 outreach to potential 61 property owners. Members of the Commission will look into this possibility and report back at our November meeting.

**C.** Cable TV Webinars- The Franklin Agricultural Commission will begin working on creating several cable television webinars to educate residents on: seed-starting, planting for pollinators, and growing giant pumpkins.

**3. Old Business:**

A. The Winter Farmer’s Market- The market will occur twice a month on Saturdays from November 20th to April 9th. The market will take place inside of 2 large greenhouses. There will be 32 vendors selling as assortment of agricultural goods and locally made products. The Franklin Agricultural Commission will have an information booth and a table for art/craft activities for children.

B. Harvest festival- Mel reported that 70 pumpkins were purchased and decorated at the event. Next year we will include more tables for decorating pumpkins and a wash station to make clean-up easier.

The meeting was adjourned by CJ and Marian at 8:02pm.

Minutes submitted by: Marian Szymanski