

Town of Franklin

Town Administrator
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355 East Central Street
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038-1352

Memorandum

To: Town Council

From: Jamie Hellen

RE: Agricultural Commission Legislation

The proposal before the Council this evening is to authorize a home rule petition to the state Legislature to file on behalf of the Town. The attached language will be submitted to Representative Roy for filing.

The proposed Commission comes from a citizen initiative to create an Agricultural Commission to help educate and support our local agricultural resources. The language in the charge hopefully speaks for itself, but some of the activities the group would like to do in the next couple of years are:

- A “buy local” campaign;
- provide educational materials to residents about the great agricultural businesses and products made in town (from fruits, vegetables, flowers, honey and so many more great products);
- help educate on conflicts between farmers and neighbors;
- have a presence at many local events like the Farmer’s Market, the Downtown Partnership events (Strolls, etc) and other various town events; and
- networking more with town staff, other Boards and Committees and community stakeholders on the issues affecting farmers in Franklin or the region.

The Administration has worked with the citizens over the past couple months to develop this language and have agreed on the language submitted. Additionally, some members of the EDC met with the proponents last month to hear their questions and concerns and how to address them in the Commission charge.

Jeff and I are available for any questions you may have.



TOWN OF FRANKLIN

RESOLUTION 17-34

**REQUEST FOR SPECIAL LEGISLATION,
RE: AUTHORIZATION FOR TOWN TO ESTABLISH
A LOCAL AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
WITH LIMITED AUTHORITY**

WHEREAS, Town desires to establish a local agricultural commission, but does not wish to have the commission have the full authority specified in G.L. Chapter 40, Section 8L.

WHEREAS, The so-called Home Rule Amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution provides a mechanism for a municipality to petition the General Court to enact legislation applicable only to that municipality, including the proposed legislation.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Town of Franklin acting by and through its Town Council hereby petitions the General Court to enact the legislation captioned "An Act Authorizing the Town of Franklin to Establish a Local Agricultural Commission with Limited Authority", a copy of which is attached hereto as "Exhibit 1" for Franklin's benefit, in substantially the form attached, and directs the Town Administrator to transmit said legislation to State Representative Jeffrey N. Roy for filing.

This Resolution shall become effective according to the rules and regulations of the Town of Franklin Home Rule Charter.

DATED: _____, 2017

VOTED:

UNANIMOUS _____

A True Record Attest:

YES _____ **NO** _____

ABSTAIN _____

**Teresa M. Burr
Town Clerk**

ABSENT _____

**Judith Pond Pfeffer, Clerk
Franklin Town Council**

**An Act Authorizing the Town of Franklin to Establish a
Local Agricultural Commission with Limited Authority**

Section 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of G.L. Chapter 40, Section 8L or any other general or special legislation, the Town of Franklin is hereby authorized to establish a local agricultural commission to be known as the Franklin Agricultural Commission (“Commission”).

Section 2. The purpose of the Commission is to promote, develop and foster agricultural resources in the Town of Franklin. The Commission is authorized to conduct the following activities:

- educate the public on agricultural issues;
- advocate for farmers and farm interests;
- seek to coordinate agricultural-related activities with other governmental bodies or unofficial local groups or organizations that promote agriculture; and
- assist farmers in resolving municipal problems or conflicts related to farms through education and communication.

Section 3. (a) The Commission shall consist of five members who shall be residents of the municipality. At least two of the five members shall be active farmers, employed in an agriculture-related field or have demonstrated knowledge and experience in agricultural practices or knowledge of related agricultural business.

(b) The members of the Commission shall be appointed, as provided in the Franklin Town Charter. Each member of the commission shall serve for a term of 3 years; provided, however, that the initial members appointed under this section shall serve for terms of 1, 2 or 3 years and the terms shall be arranged by the appointing authority so that the terms of approximately one-third of the Commission’s members shall expire each year.

(c) The Commission shall appoint a chair, vice-chair and a clerk annually.

Section 4. The Commission shall keep accurate and timely records of its meetings and actions and shall file an annual report with the clerk of the municipality. The Commission’s annual report shall be posted on the municipality’s public website and shall be printed in the annual town report each year.

Section 5. This act shall become effective upon passage.