

Agricultural Commission
10/7/21 Meeting Notes
Present: Anna, Ed, Sadie, Erin

Wolf Tree Farm

A neighbor has complained about the noise of a cannon the farm is using to deter animals. The Building Inspector has declined to take any action. The neighbor is willing to write a grant that would help to pay for the use of an alternative method of deterrence.

Ed suggested that the neighbor should seek support from other neighbors, and Sadie pointed out that they should also make a formal request to the Ag Comm for mediation.

Action Items:

Anna will reach out to the neighbor to suggest seeking neighborhood support, and that she make a formal request for mediation.

Community Composting

Discussed programs in Somerville and Greenfield that could serve as models for starting one in Plainfield.

Action items:

Sadie will reach out to Joan Wattman, who has information about the Somerville program.

Wetland Protection Bylaw

Ed shared information about a meeting that discussed a proposed town bylaw that would increase regulations around wetland protection. Ultimately the bylaw will be presented in a public forum and voted on at Town Meeting. Ed doesn't feel this bylaw is particularly relevant to the Ag Comm.

Barn Inspections

A recent notice in the Post sparked interest in getting more information about these inspections. The notice states that "The state requires the Animal Inspector to inspect all livestock and poultry, including horses that are being housed in the town of Plainfield."

Action items:

Ed will reach out to Kate Nevins (Animal Inspector).

Jumping Worms

Anna asked if publishing information in the Post again would be valuable, as a concise reminder to residents about why the worms are an issue and what actions they can take to prevent/eradicate them. Sadie wondered if the Ag Comm should offer residents the ability to report finding jumping worms on their property.

Action items:

Anna will publish an abbreviated reminder in the Post.

Pollinator Happenings

Elaine and Ann are applying for a Plainfield Cultural Council grant to create a Pollinator Corridor in town. Such corridors are common in more densely populated areas, so it would be interesting to see what one would look like in a rural environment.

Ann had been the town's representative for NOFA's MA Pollinator Network, but has stepped down and is seeking a replacement.

Opt Out

Anna reported that Plainfield has been granted permission by the state to opt out of mosquito spraying. There were no cases of Equine Encephalitis in MA this year. Next year there will be stricter requirements in order to opt out, and one of the pre-requisites is to have a solid public education program. To that end, Sanderson is seeking an effective speaker to give a presentation about mosquitos at an assembly. Anna mentioned that there is a bill in the works that supports a more environmentally sound method of mosquito control.

Terms of service

Ag Comm is looking for clarity on the length of each member's term.

Action items:

Erin will ask Ruth to clarify.

Other action items:

Ed and/or Anna will send Erin old meeting notes, as well as any other paperwork needed.