

Harvard Agricultural Advisory Commission (HAAC) Town of Harvard, MA

Minutes of Meeting April 5, 2023
Approved October 25, 2023

Members Present: Kerri Green - Chair, Matt Varrell, Christiane Turnheim

Green called meeting to order at 7:04pm

In memory of Frank Carlson:

Green acknowledged the extraordinary contributions of Frank Carlson, who had passed away a few days earlier, to Harvard's Agriculture and the town overall. Varrell and Turnheim joined with statements of acknowledgement for Frank Carlson's lifetime work accomplishments.

Recruitment:

As Frank Carlson was a long-time member of the Agricultural Advisory Commission and after his death the commission has only three remaining members, Green agreed to Varrell's suggestion to send out a recruitment email to Harvard's farmers and homesteaders, who had attended an Ag Commission event in the past.

• Review/Approve Minutes

Turnheim made a motion to approve the minutes of 8/31/22. Varrell seconded. Minutes were unanimously approved.

• Update on Harvard Grown & RTF Signs

The first Harvard Grown & RTF signs are up. All Ag Commission members expressed their appreciation that the replacement of the old Right-to-Farm signs is under way and that they liked the look of it. Only the sign on Brown Road coming into Harvard, which was placed on the left side, would be better placed on the right side. Green said that she will email the town a request to move this sign to the right side to improve readability.

• Member & Chair Updates

Harvard Climate Initiative – Climate Action Plan: Turnheim, who represents the HAAC within the HCIC, reported about the ongoing review of climate action goals listed in the CAP for Harvard and their progress. In one of the next HCIC meetings, Agriculture will be reviewed. Turnheim suggested that the HAAC review the goals for Agriculture and determine next steps toward achieving them. Varrell proposed to create an online public

forum using the Harvard Grown website to provide opportunity for discussions of best agricultural practices. The forum would be open for everyone to post and moderated by the Ag Commission. Turnheim cautioned that using the Harvard Grown website may lead to the misconception that opinions expressed in the forum are representative of the HAAC, and therefore a disclaimer would be needed.

Green shared links to resources for best practices that are already posted on the webpage of the HAAC on the town website.

HAAC members agreed to organize an annual public meeting about best practices focused on specific topics. The first meeting is planned for early 2024. Topics for preliminary research to prepare these meetings were assigned to HAAC members. Green will focus on regenerative farm practices, Varrell will gather information for a meeting about sustainable pasture management, and Turnheim will focus on research about soil health, pest and disease management. The preliminary research will be discussed in the June meeting.

- **Determine date of next meeting:**

The next meeting will be on 4/26/2023.

- **Adjourn**

Varrell made a motion to adjourn. Turnheim seconded. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30.

Submitted by: C. Turnheim