

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

Minutes of Meeting December 7, 2022
Approved October 25, 2023

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

Green called the meeting to order at 7:20pm

Review Harvard Grown & RTF Location Images

The Commission reviewed images of proposed locations for the Harvard Grown/Right to Farm signs. A list of which locations we guessed would need new sign posts was determined, and would be presented to DPW Director, Tim Kilhart.

Review/Approve FY24 Budget Submission

Green presented the new form for submitting the Commission's FY24 budget request. Green explained to members that the draft was submitted to Town Hall by its due date (12/1/22) with the explanation that our Commission had not met to "approve" the budget submission due to a meeting cancellation. Members reviewed and discussed the \$1,500 FY24 budget request submission. Minor edits to language were made.

Varrell made a motion to approve the FY24 Budget Submission as prepared by Green. Turnheim seconded. All were in favor.

Review/Approve Update on the 7-year Action Items assigned to Ag Comm in the 2016 Open Space Recreation Plan

Green explained that Liz Allard from the Land Use Boards had asked the Commission to review/update the status of the items assigned to Ag Comm in the Town's 2016 Open Space & Recreation Plan for the Open Space Committee.

Members discussed the current status of the two Action Items:

Objective 3b: Publicize land that needs to be preserved - Create a brochure to inform the public of the importance of protecting agricultural land

- To date the HAAC has not produced a brochure informing the public the importance of protecting agricultural land but should note that the HCIC has this as an action item in the new Climate Action Plan

Objective 3d: Support active agriculture In conjunction with the HAAC, develop a plan to promote local commercial agriculture

- *With the assistance of a MVP Action Grant in 2020, the HAAC produced a logo, promotional brochure with website highlighting commercial farms in Harvard. (Also included Fruitlands and The General Store) Both the brochure and website are editable, to allow for updated info or new farms. The Commission recently purchased new 18" round signs of the Harvard Grown logo and "A Right to Farm Community" placards. DPW will be installing these after winter most likely due to time availability within that department.*

Varrell made a motion to approve the Action Item Update for the Open Space Committee. Turnheim seconded. All were in favor.

Proposed Protective Bylaw Amendment §125-7 Agricultural Uses

Green provided an update since the last meeting regarding the Proposed Protective Bylaw Amendment §125-7 Agricultural Uses. While other members (Turnheim and Varrell) were present for the Planning Board's public hearing Green reported that there appears to be a lot of confusion surrounding who can amend the proposed amendment and who cannot. Green presented some possible updated language shared by the PB chair to Green.

The sentence addition was what was discussed and suggested @ PB to add in a reference to 125-20 stating the accessory use would be subject to the provisions of 125-20. It has not been drafted as of yet but would likely be what I put in purple below - note, this is a DRAFT and could change.

"Accessory entertainment activities", provided that a license for such entertainment is obtained from the Select Board. For the purposes of this section, accessory entertainment activities means non-agricultural offerings, commonly used as incidental components of on-farm direct marketing activities, that are accessory to, and serve to increase, the direct-market sales of the agricultural output of a commercial farm. Such activities are designed to attract customers to a commercial farm by enhancing the experience of purchasing agricultural products. Such activities may have a fee associated with them, but such fees shall be de minimis compared to the income generated from the sale of the agricultural output of the commercial farm. Further, no license issued

hereunder shall be entitled to the protections afforded pursuant to § 123-3 nor be exempt from the requirements of 125-20.

Adopted in part N.J.S.A. 54:4-23.1

Even with this language it is still unclear what constitutes entertainment. Town's legal council provided an unclear explanation as to what is an entertainment vs event. Green explained that the town does not have an Event's license, but Green provided the MGL language related to what types of entertainment constitutes an Entertainment license.

After moving around and reading MGL language and the town's Entertainment license language Varrell made a statement that chasing all of this is beyond our Commission and the fact that the proposed amendment is thin and bringing up all these questions really shows we should just be rejecting it. He said someone at a higher level committee should be doing finding these answers. Green asked for any additional comments in which should be passed along to the PB. Green copied notes - see attached.

Member & Chair Updates

Green had no Chair updates.

Turnheim said that HCIC will be applying for an MVP Action grant, and will be looking for any opportunities to include Ag.

Determine date of next meeting

Members planned their next meeting to be December 21st if needed based on proposed language, otherwise we would meet January 24th. Varrell expressed that unless the PB were to come back with something substantial for us to discuss, he doesn't see why we should waste our time talking about everything we have already discussed and shared with the PB. Green also said she would provide any updates as they come available including the Special Town meeting time/date.

Adjourn

Varrell made a motion to adjourn. Turnheim seconded. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.

Submitted by: K.Green