

## HOLLISTON AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MINUTES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Members present: Justin Brown (associate), Janet Horne, Natalie Kent (associate), PJ Kilkelly (associate), Donna Kramer, Tony Lulek, Helen MacArthur and Paula Mark.

Guests: Bobby Blair, Mary Greendale and Jeff LeFleur.

Meeting Called to Order: Vice Chairperson, Paula Mark called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Minutes of the Last Meeting: Justin Brown made a motion, seconded by PJ Kilkelly, to accept the minutes of the January 14, 2014 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Winter Event: Everything is in place for the event. Parking will be in the yard ó front and back and on the side dirt road. Members of the commission will park on the dirt road.

Cranberry Bog: Jeff Fleur, head of the Division of National Association of Conservation Districts and a bog owner in Plympton, was introduced by Mary Greendale. Mary had spoken to Jeff and asked him to come to one of our meetings to outline what is involved in developing a bog. Tony Lulek outlined what we have done so far and what we want to do. Jeff asked what is our objective to which Donna replied that we wanted to develop a bog for educational purposes. Mary Greendale stated that Holliston stock is no longer at the Wareham station. Jeff reported that Rutgers University in Chatsworth, New Jersey has an active breeding program. We could have the Hollistonian DNA printed. Frank Caruso has been working closely with Rutgers. Jeff gave a short history on the cranberry. Middlesex county had been one of the highest producers of cranberries. In November of 1959 there was a health scare that cranberries caused cancer. The whole industry lost a lot of acres at that time. The challenge is that once a bog has been abandoned it becomes a wetland. In 1996 the state passed a law for reclamation of bogs. There is a window of 5 years on abandonment. It is almost impossible to reclaim bogs. Cranberries do not like to be constantly wet. The only time that bogs are flooded is at harvest and in the wintertime. The growers now spray water on the plants on cold, frosty nights. This can now be programmed by a computer. Of the three cranberries native to Holliston, the Hollistorian is the largest so it would be more susceptible to the frost. Jeff mentioned that at his bog in Plympton, he runs a program of öbeing a cranberry grower for a dayö. Tony Lulek asked the question if we could do a naturally planting. The plant grows well in sandy soil and could be grown in a raised bed. The plant grows to about 6 inches. We could take cuttings from wild plants and propagate them. We would plant one per square foot. It was suggested that we set up an area in the Community Garden to plant the cranberries. They would be planted in 6 inches of sand with manure under the sand. They can be planted all the way into June. We could also do a fall planting. Mid to late April would be a good time for us to get the plants. We will need to get clean course sand and peat moss with a low Ph. Jeff told us that in Massachusetts, cranberries is the number one food crop and the number two producer. Ocean Spray is a co-op. After planting a bog it takes three years to get a first crop.

Farms Day ó It was decided that September 21, 2014 would be the date for Farms Day.

Community Garden: Tony Lulek reported that he is still waiting for applications from the gardeners.

Miscellaneous: - Donna Kramer stated that on September 13, 2014, Breezy Hill Farm will be having a 5K race as a fund raiser. Justin Brown reported that he has gotten the list on 61A which has to be converted. Bobby Blair gave us information relative to America in Bloom. The judges will be here on July 24, 2014 and July 25, 2014. PJ Kilkelly will represent the Commission on the America in Bloom committee. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, April 16, 2014.

Justin Brown made a motion, seconded by Paula Mark, to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet Horne, Clerk