

Eliot Agriculture and Food Security Commission

Meeting Location: Town Hall

Meeting Date: 4/1/2024

Called to order at 4:34 pm

Attendees: Leslie Stevens, Sarah Polcharczyk, Norman Owens

Others: Jeff Brubaker, Town Planner, Eliot

Minutes were accepted from the March 4, 2024 meeting

Discussion of new mushroom farm in Eliot. EAFSC reached out to farm owner but have not heard back. We would like to add them to our map.

Comprehensive plan update with Jeff Brubaker. Led discussion about some of the things EAFSC has been working on and ideas for potential projects and things the town could do to enhance agriculture and farm land conservation as well as support farmers and producers.

* Riverside, the Rec departments upcoming community event, is not a farmer's market but more of a community market

* If EAFSC were to sponsor a farmer's market, 1x a month and 1 year lead time planning it

* 10-15 vendors would be about the right size for our community

Should there be a farmer's market?

* Many winter farmer's markets are successful, but there are many markets around so competition is an issue. Choosing a good date would be important to avoid competition. This is a huge undertaking and would require many more volunteers.

Sponsoring a Community garden is more our speed, AFSC has talked about a community garden

Ideal location: next to Town Hall

Want it to be central and visible. This remains on our radar as a possible project for the future.

Discussion of the EAFSC farm map which includes farm stores, farms that are producing, and other food producers like honey and mushrooms.

We would like to see the map on the town web site but it's static, we would ideally love it if it would be active so people could actually click on the individual farms/producers and learn about them.

EAFSC would like the tax program data for next meeting and Jeff said he would provide this.

We would like to add that Eliot is a food sovereign town to the inventory for the CP.

Also add the term food producers as well as farmers.

Discussion of possible partnerships for conserving agriculture land and land under threat of development.

Sarah updated on the mushroom class – class is full, 15 signed up. Discussed needed materials (logs, spores, tools, cardboard, etc.) for setup, location, presentation content, techniques for growing mushrooms. Sarah will send out presentation for Committee's review.

Leslie updated that she is participating in a workshop that Thatcher Carter from MFT put together about farmers working with municipalities. It is a zoom workshop on April 11 from 10am to 11am and Leslie has been asked to talk about the EAFSC.

Leslie updated on the possibility of partnering with the William Fogg Library to sponsor a Seed Saving Workshop. Discussion of how the Library's seed library works and need to have a workshop to teach people how to save seeds that could benefit the library's seed library. Leslie will follow up with the library.

Norman gave an update on Footprints – Soups for Seniors – he is meeting with Footprints, need to find all the produce, keeping it fresh, finding containers, and distributing it. Discussion of types of soups (e.g. purees) and seasonal ingredients. Will look into Eliot Connects and gleaning program. Will see if there is extra produce that would be thrown away, make soup, and see if Footprints could use it.

Meeting adjourned at 5:32

Jeff Brubaker, AICP
Town Planner
Town of Eliot