

Draft MINUTES
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEETING
Town Hall Meeting Room
334 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230
Thursday, January 30, 2018, 3:00 PM

1. The Meeting was called to order by Chair Vivian Orłowski at 3:03pm

Present: Members: Krycia Kurzyca, Vivian Orłowski, Hilda Banks Shapiro. Advisor: Devan Arnold

Guests: Conway School graduate students: Renee Ruhl, Elan Bills, Evan Abramson

22 people attended including those from the Town of GB, community organizations and Conway.

2. New Business

- Vivian introduced the Conway School graduate students and the GB Pollinator Plan project:
Project of the Town of Great Barrington under supervision of DPW Superintendent Sean Van Deusen with Agricultural Commission in an advisory capacity.
Helping implement 2016 Town Meeting Pollinator-Friendly Community Resolution
- Conway Students gave a presentation that included:
Project goals and site context
Preliminary analysis of Great Barrington
Pollinator research including needs, threats and implications

- Group Activity Breakout Session

Four breakout groups performed an assigned activity. Each group was provided a map of Great Barrington, markers, trace paper and an instructional sheet. The sheet listed “physical resources” and “pollinator needs.” They were asked to choose items from each list and align them with sites on the map to identify existing and potential areas that could fit the selected needs.

- Group Presentations

Each group posted their map and presented opportunities and suggestions for supporting pollinator habitat.

Group 1: Identified a list of partners along the Route 7 / Housatonic River corridor that have invested in the land and have someone dedicated to manage. Land management and maintenance is of concern and suggest small efforts done well. To convince landowners to mow less, suggested providing a list of mechanical strategies, a mowing schedule based on zones of purpose, a rationale for the change and show gas costs saved vs. cost of plants and upkeep.

Group 2: Identified town-owned spots to have gardens that connect from Stanley Park to the River Walk continuation, Town Hall, Library, McAllister Wildlife Refuge, Newsboy Statue, cemetery near Belcher Square. Proposed green cemeteries with pollinator-friendly plantings and land care practices.

Group 3: Identified the Pfeiffer Arboretum, community education is recommended, asked that the Conway plan include resources that Great Barrington already has and celebrate what we are currently doing. The library has a seed bank already and wants to find a way to provide access, connect local businesses and nursery partners, put information on the town website, recommend the library has books on pollinators and greater education held at the library, engage local schools, engage with planning board to implement laws to encourage pollinator gardens.

Group 4: Forest blocks east of Route 7 are more pollinator friendly areas. Landowners could become certified with a few tips for their meadows, “Keep up with the ecological Jones,” change mowing regime with schedule of when and how much and how often, outreach to schools, neighborhoods set part of their yard as a pollinator area, put up pesticide-free and pollinator-friendly signs, cemeteries, mapped pesticides in water, create a buffer zone around waterways, town serve as a seed bank.

3. Citizen Speak: No additional comments

4. Adjourn: Vivian Orłowski moved to adjourn. Krycia Kurzyca seconded the motion. Vote: 3 – 0 to approve.

Meeting adjourned at 4:41pm.