

Minutes

March 8, 2017

Attendees: Paul Atwood, Margaret Perkins

Meeting called to order at 7:30 pm

Welcome to Mike Kassel, possible new member

Paul attended the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Association of Agricultural Commissions. There are 150 towns in Massachusetts with Agricultural Commissions, but not all actually function. About 25 participate at the state level.

- ⤴ Interact with Farm Bureau
- ⤴ Interact with state legislature

Annual Meeting Topics

- ⤴ Agricultural Commissions and Boards of Health
 - Boards of Health have very broad powers. In some towns, these have spilled over into agricultural areas.
 - Boards of Health are supposed to look after human health, not animal health unless it affects human health
- ⤴ Legislative Advisor for Farm Bureau
 - Proposed Act: Municipal Agricultural Commission Enabling Act
 - presently advisory only, but Act would change the way AgComs function. If matters considered by the BOH spill over into agriculture, input from AgCom will be required.
 - Towns could vote out the old Enabling Act and adopt the new one.
 - AgComs could buy or lease land.
 - AgComs could receive state and federal grants, and bequests, and hold fundraisers
 - AgComs role would continue to include educating, assisting, advocating, and coordinating with other bodies

General discussion:

Medway's new animal bylaws done without input from farms

Best management practices versus standard management practices. Standard practice may be less than best, but necessary to make a living. Farming not always pretty.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm

Respectfully submitted by
Margaret Perkins