

**FIRST MEETING GUIDANCE
(TOWN)
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

Goals of the Agricultural Commission

1. Preserve, revitalize and sustain the (TOWN) agricultural businesses and its lands.
2. Encourage the pursuit of agriculture as a career choice and lifestyle.
3. Promote agricultural-based economic opportunities.

Background

1. On (DATE) more than (number) of local farmers and residents met (PLACE) to discuss the usefulness of establishing an Agricultural Commission in (PLACE). A Steering Committee was formed at this meeting.
2. If (TOWN) is to retain agricultural lands and businesses, it will not be by chance, but by design and effort. The formation of an Agricultural Commission is the beginning of both the design and effort needed to meet the stated goals.
3. Residents of (TOWN) want to retain an agricultural lifestyle, not just rural character. Residents want a choice and an opportunity to pursue and retain farming businesses in town.

What will the Agricultural Commission do for (TOWN)

1. Provide a voice for farmers and visibility of farming as a business.
2. Inventory, identify and map agricultural properties in (TOWN).
3. Complete an Agricultural Needs Assessment which will be used to set priorities and direct activities of the Agricultural Commission.
4. Connect farmers to assistance which may consist of the following, natural resource conservation planning, technical assistance, financial assistance, business assistance, grants, loans, estate planning...
5. Network farmers and managers to available farmland, educational opportunities and agriculturally related information.
6. Serve as an advocate, mediator, and or negotiator with respect to farming complaints, issues and regulatory processes.
7. Foster healthy agricultural business management.
8. Further farmland protection efforts by assisting farmers with access to state, federal and private funding.
9. Request full use of town's 120 day waiting process period in Chapter 61 right of first refusal process. Evaluate value of property for protection and publicize opportunity for its agricultural use.
10. Develop lines of communication with the (TOWN) Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, and Boards of Health, Planning and Zoning, and their staff. Provide expert input on agricultural issues brought before these boards.
11. Develop relationships with state and federal legislators.
12. Advocate zoning and regulatory changes that benefit existing and future farming businesses.