

Town of Durham, Maine Agricultural Committee Charter

Purpose

The purpose of the Durham Agricultural Committee is to promote, enhance and protect farming and farmland in Durham, Maine to ensure the rural character of our town into the future. The Committee will help guide the town in developing or revising policies and ordinances related to agriculture.

Organization and Membership

- A.** The Durham Agricultural Committee shall be comprised of 9 members with two alternates, appointed for three (3) year terms by the Select Board. Members shall represent a broad spectrum of active and retired farmers and other citizens who are interested in supporting agriculture in Durham.

Roles and Responsibilities

- A.** Act as an advisory and recommending body to the Select Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and other municipal committees and town staff on matters relating to agriculture in our community.
- B.** Work on implementing strategies and actions identified in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.
- C.** Periodically review the comprehensive plan and land use ordinances for provisions that relate to farming in order to identify potential barriers for farming and identify opportunities to modify the documents to better support farming.
- D.** Propose modifications or amendments to the comprehensive plan and ordinances to better support farming while protecting the health, safety and welfare of all residents.
- E.** Recommend and facilitate broad public participation in changes to municipal policies and ordinances that affect farming and provide multiple opportunities for public input as each change is proposed.
- F.** Research methods other communities are using to support agriculture and share information and ideas with community leaders.
- G.** Sponsor events related to local farming such as community suppers, farm forums or workshops, or a harvest festival. Support local farms in participating in Open Farm Day and other Statewide celebrations of local agriculture.

Procedures

The following guidelines and procedures are intended to guide the Durham Agricultural Committee in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities.

- A.** The Committee shall elect a chair and a secretary at its first meeting each calendar year and agree to a committee structure and process for decision-making.

- B.** A detailed work plan and timeline will be developed that reflects any priorities agreed to by the Committee members. This work plan and timeline will be distributed to the Select Board, Planning Board and other committees as appropriate for comments.
- C.** The Committee should strive to achieve consensus on all recommendations while remaining sensitive to diverse citizen views and concerns.
- D.** The Committee should keep any proposed changes or amendments to municipal documents as simple and straightforward as possible while ensuring that all proposed changes meet minimum State requirements for land use regulation.
- E.** All meetings of the Committee must be posted with required public notice and open to the public with the appropriate level of public participation to be decided by the Committee. At a minimum, an opportunity for public comment should be provided at each meeting.
- F.** Written minutes of each Committee meeting must be available to the public.
- G.** An annual report of the Committee's activities must be prepared and presented to the Select Board and included in the annual town report.