

Warner Agriculture Commission 1/10/22

Members present:

Sam Bower, Bob Bower, Amelia Gardner, Bill Hanson, Cathy Aranosian, Jim Zablocki, Mike Amaral, Mike Biagiotti, Jen Courser, Dan Swegart, James Gaffney

Guest Speaker:

Bret Ingold

General Public:

Ray Martin

Meeting Began at 7:00 pm

1. Approved Meeting minutes: N/A
2. Guest Speaker: Bret Ingold. Co-owner of Warner Public Market, on the board for Main St. Warner Inc, and involved in the Kawasiwajo Community Land Trust (KCLT) renovation and housing project at the Foster Farm on Joppa Rd. Warner Public Market offers fresh local produce, dairy, meat and groceries alongside sustainably sourced household goods, herbal apothecary and handmade art and craft. Their cooperatively-run store provides a space for gatherings and educational workshops where all are welcome to help build a healthy community and participate in a thriving local economy. Main St. Warner inc is a 501(c)3 non-profit. Most recently they purchased the old Masonic lodge located on Kearsarge Mountain Rd just off of Main St. The hopes for this building include a commercial kitchen that could be available for producers, consumers or businesses who are interested in improving our local food system through value-added products, waste reduction, and partnerships with local farms. The building could be used to host events. For example when the Jim Mitchell stage closes for the winter, the Masonic Lodge could be a winter venue to keep the free music series going. There is a hope that the Warner Food Pantry could use space in the building and community meals could be provided throughout the year. The Kawasiwajo Community Land Trust is attempting to link agricultural workers with affordable housing. This system, if found to work, could be used as a template for more locations in Warner or throughout the State. Tenants would have access to job positions offered by local Warner farms, markets, and agricultural enterprises. Being accepted as an employee by one or more of these businesses would be a requirement for housing and tenants would also have the opportunity to work on Foster Farm itself. The project is still finalizing its structure, but ideas for reducing the cost of living in the farm house could include working the onsite farm, doing property improvements or participating in the KCLT project directly. As a community land trust, KCLT will work in the future to hold more properties through a land trust model in an effort to provide affordable access to land and housing in our region. Although their first project is the Foster Farm, they hope more properties (houses and land) would be added to their holdings.
3. New Business: Reach out to Kearsarge Food Hub as possible presenter for next months meeting
4. Old Business: Website, Agritourism discussion

5. Communications: none
6. Adjourn: 8:30