

**UMass Extension Board of Public Overseers
UMass Campus Center, Amherst
Friday, June 22, 2012**

Members Present:

Jack Angley, Ted Wales, Marla Michel, Art Eve, Michael Leuders, Stephen Herbert, Richard Chandler (representing MDAR)

Members Absent: Lynn Griesemer, Rena Prendergast, Ed Davidian, Eugene Tworek, Jerry Myers, John Lee, Patricia Bigelow, Christy Foote-Smith

Advisory Board Members Present: Ed Bourgeois

Guests: Mary Jane Bacon, Joe Shoenfeld, Christine Hatch, Cheryl Dukes, Kathy Carroll, William Miller, John Spargo, Steve Goodwin, Robert Schrader, Nancy Garrabrants, Wes Autio, Paul Fissette, Ben Weil, Tim Randhir, Pauls Rees, Masoud Hashemi

1. Welcome - Jack Angley

Meeting called to order at 10:02

2. Approval of Minutes – Jack Angley

Meeting minutes were approved for meetings held on November 18, 2011, January 27, 2012 and March 23, 2012

3. College of Natural Sciences Welcome – Steve Goodwin

Steve Goodwin, Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, welcomed the Board to Amherst. Dean Goodwin highlighted a number of positive changes underway at UMass supportive of Agriculture. These include formation of the Stockbridge School of Agriculture as an academic department. Steve noted Wes Autio has been appointed Director and that 26 faculty have transferred to the School. Steve also described the new approach of hiring Extension Faculty positions introduces a new model for Extension that strengthens academic connections. He also described the Center's intent to appoint regional field staff to serve as a problem solving conduit between the university and communities, as well as a goal to develop the Agricultural Learning Center at UMass Amherst.

4. Board of Overseers Membership Nomination - Bob Schrader

Bob Schrader provided an update on the nomination process for the five year term that begins in January, 2013. All seven organizations nominating members to the Board have been contacted. Bob reported that all but one have responded positively to the nomination request. Two organizations have already submitted nominations. Bob noted that Christy Foote-Smith had been nominated by Audubon, replacing Heidi Ricci and was attending this meeting as a direct result of communications with Massachusetts Audubon.

5. Status of Center for Agriculture Reorganization Process - Joe Shoenfeld

Joe Shoenfeld provided an update on the process begun in the fall, 2011, to develop a new organizational model for supporting research and education programs within the Center for Agriculture. Joe noted the model would be released soon with a goal of implementation beginning October 1, 2012. The new model has been informed by four meetings with department faculty, a half day meeting of Extension staff and subsequent input from a follow up working group. Goals of the reorganization include developing a more flexible and responsive organization; a stronger connection to research and investment in Extension faculty; and to recreate a community presence through the use of technology and regional staff. In closing Joe stated the UMass Faculty Senate had not yet acted on a request to change the name to the Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment.

6. Center for Agriculture Update – Stephen Herbert

UMass Amherst Agricultural Learning Center

Stephen stated communications with neighbors of the proposed 45+ acre site (Wysocki Field) was scheduled for July and he was optimistic the Center concept would continue to progress. He noted the afternoon tour would briefly stop at the site. See enclosure describing the Center.

Waltham Center for Urban Sustainability

Kathy Carroll took the lead in describing this initiative to redevelop the UMass Waltham property (formerly Suburban Experiment Station – see enclosure). She explained the stakeholder listening process conducted by the Center and subsequent development of this concept paper. She noted there were two specific areas for work – an initiative with agricultural and green industry partners to develop a sustainable funding stream and an effort to secure public funding through the soon to be initiated Massachusetts Environmental Bond Bill. This work builds on the 2009 reuse study conducted by UMass faculty member Jack Ahern.

Discussion followed related to positioning this project within the Environmental Bond Bill as Mary Jane Bacon explained the advantage of having a project included in the initial writing of the bill. Ted Wales noted Senator Fargo (representing Waltham) was retiring this term and her advocacy would be lost. Mary Jane Bacon suggested working towards a meeting with Senators Fargo and Brewer with a goal of placing the project within the bill. Responding to a question, Mary Jane noted the bill will originate in the Legislature's Natural Resources Committee before going to the respective Ways and Means Committees.

In response to a discussion of potential access to federal funds, Mary Jane Bacon explained there may be prohibitions to using federal funds for this type of public project and the potential need for a waiver should be investigated.

Ted Wales questioned whether a focus on Sustainable Urban Homesteading was forward looking enough. Discussion followed which emphasized the meaning to be progressive and focused on current urban issues related to sustainability.

7. New Extension Faculty Members

Stephen Herbert briefly introduced three new Extension Faculty members who provided 15 minute introductions to their current projects, interests and teaching areas.

John Spargo, Assistant Professor, Stockbridge School of Agriculture

John joined the faculty in the fall, 2011. With a special interest in soil fertility, John also serves as director of the Soil and Plant Tissue Diagnostic Lab.

Ben Weil, Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Conservation

Ben also joined the faculty in the fall, 2011. His specialty area is building energy systems with an emphasis on energy policy.

Christine Hatch, Assistant Professor, Geosciences

Christine also joined the faculty in the fall, 2011. Her areas of interest include distributed temperature sensing and potential effects of climate change on communities.

8. Integrated Research and Extension Project Presentation - Using technology for timing of cover crop plantings – Masoud Hashemi & Tim Randir

Drs. Hashemi and Randhir provided a PowerPoint presentation of an innovative application of cropping, weather and GIS data for developing a Decision Support System for cover crop planting recommendations in Massachusetts.

Lunch – Following lunch board members and guests toured research and education facilities

9. Tour of CNS Research and Education Greenhouse – Chris Joyner

10. Tour of Sites at S. Deerfield Farm

- a. Urban Gardening – Melissa Lowe**
- b. Dual Use Photovoltaic – Stephen Herbert**
- c. Student Farming Enterprise – Ruth Hazzard**

Materials Distributed:

1. Meeting Notes – November 18, 2011; January 27, 2012 and March 23, 2012
2. Agricultural Learning Center at UMass Amherst
3. UMass Center for Urban Sustainability at Waltham
4. Cover Crops for Nutrient Management (copy of PowerPoint presentation)

Future 2012 Meetings:

November 9, 2012

Meeting Adjourned 3:15 PM

R. Schrader
Associate Director
June 22, 2012