

UMass Extension Board of Public Overseers UMass Collaborative Service Center

Meeting Notes

January 28, 2011

Present

Members: Nancy Garrabrant, Michael Lueders, Jack Angley, John Lee, Lynn Griesemer, Jerry Myers, Eugene Tworek, Rena Prendergast, Marla Michel, Art Eve, Ted Wales

Guests: Mary Jane Bacon, Robert Schrader, Joseph Shoenfeld, Brad Mitchell, Stephen Herbert

1. Welcome – Jack Angley

Jack Angley called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

2. Approval of November 19th, 2010 Meeting Minutes – Jack Angley

John Lee made a motion to accept the notes. Michael Lueders seconded. Notes were accepted.

3. Center of Agriculture Update – Stephen Herbert

- Reported faculty within the Department of Plant, Soil and Insect Sciences have been invited by Dean Steve Goodwin to move to the Stockbridge School. He noted he expected lecturers within the Department of Veterinary and Animal Science would also be invited to move. He noted this is a significant step towards developing a department focused on applied agricultural teaching, research and Extension. Stephen noted he expected at least two additional majors – Food and Family, and Green Industries - would be developed as four year degree programs. Stephen stated Extension staff will have opportunities to affiliate with the school.
- Briefly presented the Wysocki Field project. The Center for Agriculture is seeking to create an Agriculture Learning Center on campus using an existing 15 acre parcel located on the northern edge of campus. The project would potentially involve moving an historic horse barn currently located in the center of campus.

4. UMass Extension Update – Nancy Garrabrants

- Distributed list of members of Center for Agriculture Advisory committee
- Distributed notes from four seasons food production agricultural summit held in Amherst in October, 2011.
- Plymouth County. Reported that Deborah Swanson, Plymouth County Director and clerk Debbi Corrow retired on January 26th. Ms. Swanson worked for UMass and Plymouth County, respectively, for forty years. Nancy noted Ms Swanson's agriculture position would not be refilled but that a search will be conducted for both a second 4-H Educator and clerk positions.
- Federal FY12 budget. Nancy noted a recent Republican party proposal for funding levels to revert to the FY08 level. Nancy stated Extension funding would be reduced approximately \$200,000 if enacted. Stephen Herbert is planning to visit individual members of congressional delegation, with Ken Nicewicz, in March, as a part of annual advocacy conducted by Council on Agricultural Research, Education and Teaching.
- 4-H Tax Exemption transition. Bob Schrader provided a summary of the requirement from USDA/NIFA, in collaboration with the Internal Revenue Service, for Land Grant universities to manage the group tax exemption for 4-H Clubs and affiliated organizations (not separately incorporated) in Massachusetts. The primary options include reporting all 4-H financial activity under the UMass tax return or using a new or existing non profit organization to manage tax reporting. Extension is working with the UMass controller to identify the appropriate approach.
- New England Grows will be held February 2nd – 4th in Boston. The College, Extension and Stockbridge School will host a reception on February 3rd.

5. White Paper for Ag Day at the Statehouse – Brad Mitchell

- Legislative priorities to consider for the White Paper. Brad distributed a summary of probable legislative priorities as developed by the Massachusetts Farm Bureau. These included local Board of Health regulations review; improved meat inspection services; expanding tax credit eligibility to non incorporated businesses; expanding the MDAR Board on Agriculture; raw milk distribution; creation of a Board of Livestock Care; and allowing vehicles with farm plates to carry up to their rated capacity.
- Agriculture Day is April 7th. Brad noted Farm bureau is developing a theme for the day. He expects the priorities document to be developed by March 1st in order for farm groups to review and co-sponsor.

6. Future Use of the Waltham Facility – Joe Shoenfeld

- Joe Shoenfeld referred to a background document related to the Waltham property and noted that Dean Steve Goodwin has requested "input" from the Board and the broader Agriculture community regarding potential future uses for the facility.
- A variety of comments were made, several sparking significant discussion. Suggestions included:

- To maintain a focus on economic development and job creation – M Michel
- To expand discussion of uses to include “life sciences/clean energy and engage with high tech businesses in Waltham area – L Griesemer. Considerable discussion followed on the pros and cons of broadening the scope of potential collaborations to biotech and energy. Concern was expressed regarding the potential to lose the agricultural connection.
- Create focus on urban agriculture and the green industries – T Wales
- Stephen Herbert requested that input be provided from members to Dean Goodwin. Art Eve suggested the Board draft a resolution to Dean Goodwin supporting an inquiry into potential uses, focusing on life sciences.

7. Agricultural Caucus – Nancy Garrabrant

- Nancy introduced the issue, carried forward from the last Board meeting, noting she felt developing the caucus would be best done by the Massachusetts Farm Bureau. In response, Brad Mitchell stated Farm Bureau is supportive of the idea. However, the chair of the Natural Resources committee, Senator William Strauss, considers the committee to act as a caucus and was opposed to creating an agriculture caucus. Brad noted the caucus will be a continuing discussion.
- Federal Farm Bill: Turning to the federal level, Nancy raised the question of how to work with Farm Bureau related to development of the new Farm Bill. Lynn Griesemer suggested the topic should be discussed with MDAR Commissioner Scott Soares.

8. NIFA Priorities & CFA Public Issues - Nancy Garrabrant

- Issue background materials were not ready. Agenda item postponed to next meeting

9. Issues for March Meeting - Nancy Garrabrant

Nancy asked for identification of issues for discussion at March meeting.

- FY12 Budget Advocacy. Eugene Tworek questioned whether the timing was right to advocate within UMass for FY12 Extension funding. Bob Schrader noted there is no formal process and that the budget is now nested within the College of Natural Sciences. Joe Shoenfeld suggested the board might express support for Extension to Dean Goodwin. Art Eve noted such a communication should focus on valuing the university.
- University contact person. Brad Mitchell stated the value of having the university available to be present at legislative hearings, where appropriate, to provide “expert” testimony. He noted having one contact person within the college would be helpful. Joe Shoenfeld agreed to serve as that contact person.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35 AM

Robert Schrader
Associate Director
February 3, 2011