



VERMONT MAPLE SUGAR MAKERS' ASSOCIATION

189 VERMONT ROUTE 15, JERICHO, VT 05465
PHONE: 802-858-9444
WWW.VERMONTMAPLE.ORG

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Three Stallion Inn, Randolph, VT

May 18, 2016

PRESENT: Sam Cutting, Donna Young, Arnie Piper, Arnold Coombs, Jason Gagne, Gary Gaudette, Jack Dix, Pam Green, Emma Marvin, Kerry Sedutto, Don Bourdon, Megan Davis, Rick Kobik, James Buck, Peter Purinton, Michael Emerson, Mark Bigelow
Staff present: Matt Gordon and Amanda Voyer

NOT PRESENT: Jeff Goodwin

The meeting was called to order at 9:00am by Board Chair Pam Green.

Minutes: Mike Emerson moved that the minutes for the January 2016 meeting be approved, Don Bourdon seconded. Motion passed.

Financial Report: Mark Bigelow reported for January – June 2015 there was a (\$26,000) loss, with a \$25,000 gain July-December 2015. We had budgeted for a \$20,000 total loss at end of year, we were approximately \$20,000 above the budgeted loss. There are 3 separate groupings for the budget, Eastern States, Management, and VMSMA Programming. There was a motion to accept the report by Emma Marvin, seconded by Kerry Sedutto. Motion passed.

There was discussion on releasing financial report information to membership on request. The Board agreed a summary of financial revenues and expenses should suffice on membership-only section of website.

Logo Design Report: The jugs so far have passed the tests of hot syrup canning tested at Maple Grove Farms and refrigeration and freezing tested by Matt Gordon and Pam Green. Pam Green put the jugs in a cold water bath after hot syrup and reported no issues with the labels.

Emma Marvin made a motion to approve moving forward with concept of artwork and using the wrap label instead of silkscreen. James Buck seconded. Motion passed. Select Design conducted consumer research to ensure this is the right direction. The cost and quality going forward would be stronger with applied labels over silkscreen and orders would be fulfilled more quickly.

Don Bordon made a motion for a joint meeting of the Container Committee and Design Committee to finalize the design in plans to roll out at Eastern States if possible. Jack Dix seconded. Motion passed.

Arnie Piper made a motion to give the Container and Design Committees power to make the final decision on both glass and jugs. Arnold Coombs seconded. Motion passed.

Container Committee: A letter to Container Dealers should be sent on the discontinuation of tins. Emma Marvin made a motion that the Container Committee meet and come back to the Board of Directors



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with any recommendations to changes in the contract for dealers. Mike Emmerson seconded. Motion passed

Mobile Sugarhouse Report: Mike Emerson made a motion to put the trailer up for sale. Arnie Piper seconded. Final decision on sale will be up to the Board of Directors.

Report by Chuck Ross, Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture: A formal draft of the RAP was released on Friday. There is clear evidence of a water quality problem. Studies included 5-6 months of engagement with the public preceded by 2 years of engagement with the agriculture population. Lakes and rivers throughout all of Vermont are effected. The RAP process does not address sugarmaking currently, one of most profitable enterprises in agriculture and growing. RAPs address the farming side of agriculture, not sugaring. However, sugarmaking is not without its potential effects on water quality. Machinery in woods can cause erosion and a contributor to water quality issues, not as large of an impact as other agricultural impacts, but it needs to be discussed as a conversation with sugaring stakeholders.

Discussion needs to happen in regards to water discharge issues. At a time when ground is frozen there is often a concentrated flow of water released. Is that a problem and how do we manage it? Straight RO is probably not an issue, dependent upon the temperature. A potential exists for high temperature RO to impact the stream it flows into. Cleaning chemicals could also impact the PH of water.

Secretary Ross recommends we start the conversation over the course of this summer and build a working group of representatives of various aspects of sugaring with Mike Snyder and identify problems. He encourages sugarmakers to be engaged now, to lead the conversation rather than follow. Realistically we are looking at 2018 for the regulations to be set.

Real vs Fake: Where is our jurisdiction and what is our affect. Secretary Ross reports The Agency does not have capacity to act on enforcement and do it well and marshal the appropriate regulatory response. They do not have the staff to do that. The Agency of Agriculture jurisdiction is only within the state of Vermont. They are supportive of the work and efforts taken with the FDA and feel that is the direction we should push. He recognizes it takes persistence with getting the FDA's attention and a Congressional Delegation that pushes for it.

Vermont Law School is focusing on Ag issues and if there is a labeling issue on the FDA's interpretation of "natural" ingredients. He encourages that we get other maple states on board with their own push in support. Secretary Ross is willing to co-author letter with other states.

Sugarhouse Certification: We need to educate producers on the benefits of going through the certification. It is preemptive to FDA food safety regulation, more than it is a marketing tool.

Emma Marvin made a motion that in addition to the work plan Matt presented, to explore an opportunity of working with NOFA and additional organic certifying bodies for an alternate pathway for a singular certification program. Arnie Piper seconded. Motion passed.



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Next Meeting: The next meeting will take place in late August or early September. Matt Gordon will send a poll for potential dates as well as a tentative date for the November meeting.

Adjourn: After a call for other business the meeting adjourned at 12:18pm.