

# THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



## Department of Agricultural Resources

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CHARLES D. BAKER  
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO  
Lt. Governor

MATTHEW A. BEATON  
Secretary

JOHN LEBEAUX  
Commissioner

### Meeting Minutes Board of Agriculture

**Date: 09/24/15**

**Time: 10am**

**Location: Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
1305 Memorial Ave., West Springfield, MA 01089**

**Board Members & Guests in Attendance:** Judy Leab, Chairwoman, Alison Carr, Michelle Harvey, Donald Chase, Gordon Price, Fred Dabney, Laura Abrams, Michael Smolak, Lydia Sisson, Noli Taylor and Richard Canning. Glynn Llyod participated via phone. From MDAR: John Lebeaux, Commissioner; Jason Wentworth, Assistant Commissioner; Tara Zadeh, General Counsel and Alisha Bouchard, Chief of Staff.

- 1. Call to Order & Introductions:** Chairwoman Leab called the meeting to order at 10:12am. Secretary Beaton stopped in to meet the Board and said a few words.
- 2. Minutes Summary:** The Board considered for approval the meeting minutes of 07/20/15.  
**Action Taken:** Donald Chase made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Michelle Harvey and the minutes were unanimously voted for approval.
- 3. MA Food System Plan:** Winton Pitcoff, Project Manager of Food System Plan provided the Board a Summary Presentation of the draft plan. Winton reviewed the project goals, engagement activities, working groups, recommendations and the writing of the plan. On 10/23/15 the draft plan will be publically released on Food Day before going to the Food Policy Council for consideration. Commissioner Lebeaux mentioned that conceivably whatever MDAR is required to take on as part of implementing the plan would require resources in order to take this work.  
**Action Taken:** None.
- 4. Commissioner's Report:** Commissioner Lebeaux reported that he just returned from attending the National Assoc of State Departments of Agriculture's (NASDA) annual meeting in Kona, HI. Conference agenda topics included information related to; Internal Trade and USDA Programs; Marketing, Integrated Solutions for Agriculture – Resources, Sustainability and Efficiency, Avian Flu and Food Safety. Next, the Commissioner provided an update on the status of MDAR's staffing since the Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP) where the Department lost ten employees with an additional two employees leaving in October under a one-time, payment incentive program. An update on the FY2016 state budget compared with the FY2015 budget and legislation protocol was touched upon. The Commissioner brought to the Board's attention 2016 ballot initiatives certified by the Attorney General that could impact agriculture including; An Act to Prevent Cruelty to Farm Animals and Recreational Marijuana. MDAR's work on the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is the agency's top priority and includes emergency response planning efforts with MEMA and multiple state agencies; development of flock plans in conjunction with DEP for larger poultry operations and ongoing surveillance of poultry throughout the state. It was noted that as of 9/22 there have been no new cases of HPAI detected in the U.S. since 6/17/15. Current expectation is that HPAI will be found in wild birds migrating in the Atlantic flyway as early as this fall's migration (Sept to Nov 2015), but no later than the fall migration of 2016. **Action Taken:** None.

5. **Ag Board By-Laws:** Board members were provided an opportunity to review by-laws and submit comments/draft changes to MDAR's General Counsel. **Action Taken:** None.
6. **Regulatory Review Update:** MDAR informed the Board of the work being done as part of the Governor's Executive Order 562 including the process, dates and locations for three (3) General Listening Sessions open to the public for feedback on regulations under MDAR. A smaller, stakeholder session was also being planned at MDAR offices in Boston. A discussion on invasive plants and hoisting licensing restrictions ensued. **Action Taken:** None.
7. **Update on Plant Nutrients Management Regulations:** Commissioner Lebeaux reported that MDAR has created a workgroup to assist with rolling out information on the new regulations along with handouts and fact sheets available on the Department's website. The regulations breakdown into 3 categories – agriculture, non-agricultural land and turf and; homeowners. FAQs were also created and being fine tuned for the 3 categories along with a plan template for use by farmers to assist them. **Action Taken:** None.
8. **Board Member's Hiring Package Checklist:** Distributed. **Action Taken:** None.
9. **Other Business:**
  - a. **Boston Public Market:** At the Board's request the Commissioner provided an update on how the BPM is doing since opening in July. **Action Taken:** None.
  - b. **Nominations of Officers:**
    - **Action Taken:** Fred Dabney made a motion to nominate Judy Leab for Chair. The motion was seconded by Noli Taylor and the Board voted unanimously to approve Judy Leab as Chair.
    - **Action Taken:** Gordon Price made a motion to nominate Laura Abrams for Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Richard Canning and the Board voted unanimously to approve Laura Abrams as Vice Chair.
10. **Date, Time and Location of next board meeting:** December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 at New England Grows in the Boston Convention and Exhibit Center at 10am. **Action Taken:** None.
11. **Adjournment: Action Taken:** Donald Chase made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Michael Smolak and the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting 12:45pm.