



Town of Windham

Town Offices
8 School Road
Windham, Maine

Cover Sheet

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Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program.

The Council will continue its discussion of voluntary municipal farm support programs, allowed under state law since 2007 but only implemented in one community so far, the Town of Winslow. Following the discussion of March 7, 2017 (CD 17-045) the Council asked staff to work on documents and parameters specific to Windham.

Stephanie Gilbert, from the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF), who was a primary author of the state's rules implementing the voluntary municipal farm support program statute, will join the discussion and make a brief presentation about the program.

From the March 7, 2017 meeting:

Stretching back now over decades, successive Windham comprehensive master plans have expressed a desire to protect rural character, agriculture, agricultural uses, and farming as a means of making a living. As development has continued to occur and younger generations show less interest in taking up farming, more and more pressure has been put on farming and agriculture.

Recent trends in local food production and interest in sustainability have helped raise the level of public awareness about the value of maintaining local farming and agriculture and, again, Windham's new comprehensive plan expresses a strong desire to "keep rural Windham rural." A voluntary municipal farm support program could be but one tool the town uses to accomplish this goal.

Following a Council discussion in 2015, assessing and planning staff developed and administered a survey, the results of which are attached. Also attached are copies of the state law and rules for voluntary municipal farm support programs, a fact sheet, and examples of documents from the Town of Winslow.

If the Council decides a voluntary municipal farm support program might benefit the town in achieving its goal of retaining agricultural uses, landscapes, and businesses, and supporting farming as a means of making a living, several parameters will need to be defined under state laws and rules, and require some additional work to make such a program operational.

