

Farmers market coming soon to Bozrah

Commerce and community to converge at Maples Farm Park

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Bozrah, Conn. —

A farmers market is set to open here this summer, a big step toward making Maples Farm Park a commerce generator and community gathering place.

The Bozrah Farmers Market will be open from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. every Friday from July 3 to Oct. 23, organizers say.

A contracting team headed by Ray Baker is repairing a stone wall at the town-owned park at 45 Bozrah St., or Route 163, in preparation for the opening. A large earthmover sits near the mouth of Gager Road with about half the stone wall refurbished.

Theme days and special guest appearances will be used to attract shoppers.

“The market hopes to bring fun and business to Bozrah, while being able to provide a source of locally grown foods and products to its residents,” Amanda Fargo-Johnson, a member of the organizing subcommittee, wrote in an e-mail. “It’s a great way for people to know where their food is coming from while being able to talk with the person who produced it.”

About 10 merchants have committed so far with many others expected, said Deb Stake, another member of the organizing group as well as its “market master.”

“The community has been very receptive,” she said.

“We’re excited about it,” First Selectman Bill Ballinger said.

The town bought Maples Farm Park’s 19th century house and 32 acres for \$365,000 in April 2007 from Anne Sanger, a descendant of the Gager family that had owned the parcel since the 1730s. The property had been vacant for years.

The Friends of Maples Farm Park officially formed in January, growing out of a development committee connected to the acquisition. The friends, which include Selectman Kitty McCue, created

the Bozrah Farmers Market Committee. The market panel obtained a \$35,000 state Department of Agriculture grant to start the market.

“We have been working hard to plan the market over the last few months,” Fargo-Johnson wrote. “We eventually would like to repair and get the homestead up to par.”

The town is seeking two more state grants to pay for further site work. Leaders have discussed creation of a hiking trail.

A flea market was held last fall at the site for the first time, Stake said. Another is set for Sept. 12. For now, the market committee is recruiting vendors and increasing publicity for the opening. The leader of a regional farming group set parameters for success.

“If they get a good number of customers and can sell much of what they bring, it’s a good market,” Bill Duesing, executive director of the Connecticut chapter of the Northeast Organic Farming Association, wrote in an e-mail.

The market’s opening is part of a growth trend in Connecticut. The number of markets has increased to 120, said Rick Macsuga, who oversees farmers markets for the state Department of Agriculture.

If you go

When: The Bozrah Farmers Market, 45 Bozrah St., will be open from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Fridays, July 3 to Oct. 23.

For sale: Items will include jelly, jam, eggs, kettle corn, marinated mushrooms, Italian ice, flowers, herbs, honey, fruits, goat cheese, milk, yogurt, soap, plants, coffee, baked goods, gourds, pottery, crafts, and art from nature.

Information: Visit www.bozrahfarmersmarket.webs.com. To learn about vending opportunities, call market master Deb Stake at Town Hall at (860) 889-2689, Ext. 5.