

Town of Boscawen
Agricultural Commission
Boscawen Municipal Complex
Final - Public Minutes
Thursday, October 12, 2017 at 7:00 pm

Members Present: John Keegan – Chair, Bill Bevans – Vice-Chair, Rusty Colby, John Porter, Tina Larochelle, Alan Hardy, Linda Chandonnet.

Member Ex-Officio Absent: Roger Sanborn

Alternate Member Absent: Ken Marshall

Chairman Keegan called the meeting to order at 7:06pm with a voting board.

Roll call made by Chairman Keegan.

Review and Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes:

The Commission reviewed meeting minutes from the September 14, 2017 meeting. Commission members requested to correct spelling on line 44 to Giovagnoli's.

Motion: Made by Tina Larochelle, seconded by Rusty Colby to accept the minutes from the September 14, 2017 meeting as amended, all in favor, none opposed.

Accountant's Report:

The Commission reviewed the Financial Report from January 1st thru October 12, 2017.

Motion: Made by Tina Larochelle and seconded by John Porter to accept the Financial Report, all in favor, none opposed.

Land Use Updates:

- Recognition of Highway View Farm: Mr. Porter went to the Big-E Banquet and Adam and his family did a great presentation. It was well received and quite a big crew went with his family. In all there were 6 presentations.
- Chairman Keegan asked Alan Hardy when the banner will be done. Mr. Hardy presented the board with a copy of the banner made with the larger print without the Green Pastures lettering. As soon as the banner is printed a date will be set for the presentation.

Review of Pet Regulations:

- Chairman Keegan asked the board to look at the definition of pets from Article XII Definitions of the current Zoning Ordinance. His question is if they think the regulation as written covers the issues being presented with pygmy goats and if it is sufficiently clear. Director Hardy added, if someone in an R2 zone decides to have a pygmy goat, the way the definition reads but livestock and would not be allowed except by a Special Exception. At the request of John Porter the Commissioners reviewed the definition of 'livestock' to insure that definition complimented that of 'pet' in a logical manner, which it does. It was determined to send a letter to the Planning Board and characterize our determination that no changes were necessary in the ordinance.

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Motion: Made by John Porter for John Keegan to send a letter to the Planning Board. Seconded by Tina Larochelle, all in favor, none opposed.

Director Hardy added if this becomes an issue, he will ask the ZBA for a special exception for agricultural. Chairman Keegan asked the board if this seemed fair, all agreed, none opposed.

Summary of Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition Meeting:

Mr. Porter passed around a summary to the board of his presentation to the Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition Meeting on September 18, 2017. He presented our projects and positive relationships with the town boards and commissions (See attached copy, Appendix 1). He said there were over 50-60 attendees, unfortunately there was not much discussion. However, many people were interested in what they panelist had to say. He stated that he has only heard positive things since the meeting. Mr. Porter passed around a business pamphlet from the Lee Agricultural Commission which included business cards for the listing of farms. What he took away from hearing other panelists, is they had emphasized keeping communications going within the town such as getting on the town website and having weekly updates.

Director Hardy mentioned how Boscawen's website has options to check off boxes if you want something sent to you automatically. He also talked about the 91-A Law and how the town website has both draft minutes and final minutes on the website.

Chairman Keegan asked the Commissioners if they had thought about an educational program that would reach the assessor community to help them understand the evolving tax issues related to modern farming practices, particularly new technologies. Mr. Porter stated that the appropriate way of doing this may be to go through the N.H. Municipal Association. Their annual meeting - is in November. The Barn Preservation Committee, of which John is a member, has found this a useful path to reach municipal officials, including municipal assessors.

Director Hardy and John Porter talked about the details of tax bills and evaluation, noting that farms are sometimes taxed incorrectly.

There is not enough time to prepare well for this year's annual meeting but we can reach-out to interested parties and educate ourselves about these issues. However, their website link will be sent out to the members for information and possible attendance. Chairman Keegan suggested planning to participate in next year's N.H. Municipal Association Annual Meeting with a program focused on education assessors and municipal officials about property taxation of farms. Meanwhile, Mr. Porter suggested bringing assessor Mark Stetson and Paul Franklin, a farmer and retired revenue officer to our next meeting to educate commission member, all in favor, none opposed.

Director Hardy will be reaching out to assessor Mark Stetson to attend our November meeting and Mr. Porter will reach out to Paul Franklin. Chairman Keegan will be talking to Roger Sanborn, our

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Selectman, and Bruce Crawford, Chair of the Planning Board about to attending. Mention was also made of inviting Amy Manzelli, of BCM Environmental & Land Law.

Next Month's Agenda:

Budget Development

Mark Stetson to attend our AG Comm's November Meeting.

Paul Franklin to attend our AG Comm's November Meeting.

Roger Sanborn our Selectman and Bruce Crawford, Chair of the Planning Board invite to attend our AG Comm's November Meeting.

Old Business:

Agricultural Rack Cards: All members gave a status report on the rack card stocks at stores. They say people are picking them up and reading them and then putting them back. Director Hardy suggested to add a coupon next year such as a discounted ice cream.

We are currently out of rack cards, we will watch how the stores do and what happens then decide what to do. Rack card holders are still available if needed.

Educational Program:

Chairman Keegan reported he did talk to Dot Perkins, and she thinks it a good idea to have a master gardener work on the educational program. She didn't know of anyone specifically but she will be talking to the instructors and will get back to him. They are scheduled for November or December.

Community Garden:

Chairman Keegan mentioned the cover crop has been mowed, and there is still quite a few sunflowers left. The last time he had talked to Jeff Abbe they were in the process of trying to get people to clean up their plots and there was still some work to be done. He will be talking again to Jeff and see how that's going. The shed is still in good shape and they are still making compost. Last he checked the herb garden was active.

New Business:

Mr. Porter asked if they were going to be doing any warrant articles that relate to tax incentives. Director Hardy stated the tax incentive issues is something Mark Stetson from Avitar would be able to expand on.

MOTION: To adjourn made by Bill Bevans, seconded by Tina Larochelle, all in favor, none opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for November 9, 2017 at 7pm.

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Self-Education will be discussed.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Chandonnet