

Town of Boscawen, NH

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

Boscawen Municipal Complex

MEETING MINUTES – Final

Thursday, March 10, 2016

Commissioners Present: John Keegan, Chair; Elaine Clow, Vice Chair; Bill Bevans, Tina Larochele, and Angela Swyers.

Alternate Commissioners Present: John Porter

Commissioners Absent: Josh Marshall

Commissioner Absent (Ex Officio): Roger Sanborn

Alternate Commissioner Absent: Ken Marshall

Others in attendance: Bruce Crawford, Chairman of the Planning Board

Chairman Keegan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and noted that no appointment to voting status was necessary..

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Angela Swyers, seconded by Tina Larochele, to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2016 meeting, as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Accounting Report: Chairman Keegan had no accountant's report. He did state that the budget had passed as presented and funds for invasive treatments are included in Dean's budget.

Land Use Happenings

- **Update from Alan Hardy**

Chairman Keegan said Mr. Hardy was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to illness. He asked if anyone else had anything to report in Land Use Happenings. Bruce Crawford, Chair of the Planning Board, said California Fields has been signed. Chairman Keegan said that he has bumped into Tom Giovanni a number of times in the last several months and he expects to pour concrete for the chicken coop on April 1st. Mr. Giovanni said he hadn't made a decision on whether to put up a second house. Mr. Crawford said he has plenty of room up there he could build 25 chicken houses and we'd be happy to have him.

Old Business:

- **Legislative Update**

Bruce Crawford stated that many votes were taken in Concord today. The two agritourism bills passed -- Representative Haffner's bill in the House and Senator Boutin's bill, SB 345. Both bills had amendments. Mr. Crawford has a list of bills for everyone's review.

Chairman Keegan said he had heard on NPR that John Deere was appealing its case to the U.S. Supreme Court who is not likely to hear the case. Bruce Crawford said it's basically a stalling tactic. Pay warranty claims, manufacturers supply the part, dealer has to have a fudge factor to deal with "what if" and that isn't the way it should be. He said "when we sold log loaders, manifold not ready for prime time always leaked". It took two guys to rebuild and invariably lose oil.

Mr. Crawford said one thing did happen at town meeting. Tom, Chair of the Conservation Commission, came up after the town meeting and said he'd be interested in serving on UMLAC. Two will go on now and two when Michelle and Steve Landry come off. When one is appointed to an outside board or commission, you are supposed to represent Boscawen. Current representatives are not representing Boscawen. Chairman Keegan said terms are up in early 2017 for two positions.

- **Educational Program**

Vice Chairwoman Clow said that Tim Fleury's workshop on Emerald Ash Borer was terrific and very well attended. It was to be expected that quarantine requirements are in effect in Boscawen. On April 5th Stacy Luke from the Merrimack County Conservation District will provide a presentation on "grow more, sell more". Ms. Luke is going to be doing a healthy soils talk in September. IPM is scheduled in May for community gardeners.

- **Wholesale Success Workshop - FSMA**

Vice Chair Clow attended an Audubon Society program last Thursday regarding the proposed Food Safety Modernization Act's (FSMA) proposed new rule regarding food safety for farms. It's federally governed and is not economically viable for us here in NH. A 1000 acre farm is considered a small farm. A Farmers' Guide to Food Safety was referenced. Chairman Keegan said that even if you're not a producer they have crop specific thumbnails and it's a good go-to place to get started. It is very complete and breaks it down into chunks; such as animal and pest control and they give you a few paragraphs and go into risk factors. It's intuitive the way it was put together. If anyone on the commission wants to use it, or someone you know that might be struggling with a new crop, or just wants information, the guide is useful for people who don't use the internet. This will dovetail nicely with the two programs that Elaine Clow has lined up.

- **Other**

Bruce Crawford mentioned that the Planning Board moved their meetings to the first Tuesday of the month, instead of the second.

Chairman Keegan sent a news article relative to a commercial kitchen in the Meredith area. Commissioner Merrill said she thought about the work "we had done" when she read the article. Chairman Keegan said he didn't know that it necessarily had an impact on what Meredith did; but, there are now two sites in private business in the state catering to this perceived need and both seem to be busy places.

- **Community Garden**

Bill Bevans said they have had two meetings on the Community Garden, one tonight and one last week. They are moving along. Chairman Keegan said that Bill Bevans and Elaine Clow have taken over leadership of that group and are doing a good job and have already booked the Harvest Supper.

- **2016 Project: Local Restaurant Recognition for use of Local Produce**

Chairman Keegan said the commission has discussed this in previous meetings and Josh has some good ideas surrounding the matter but, for tonight, he asked if this is an area the commission wished to focus on this year and get something moving on it. Chairman Keegan said three years ago this issue was brought up and it seems to him this is the direction the commission should be moving in. Vice Chairwoman Clow said it is easy to prepare a nice certificate of appreciation for supporting local producers. Chairman Keegan said he will make a point of stopping in to see everybody and find out what they think the Agricultural Commission could do to help their business.

New Business:

- **Town Meeting Report**

It was reported that three or four garden plot applications were received. Bruce Crawford said that Mark Varney was elected as the new Selectman, and all zoning ordinances passed by pretty good margins. There was discussion about UMLAC as reported earlier.

- **Other**

Vice Chairwoman Clow mentioned a seminar in Alton on Saving Special Places Conference. Chairman Keegan said he attended three years ago and was very impressed. Topics are from a Conservation Commission perspective. If members haven't seen the flyer, they should send Elaine Clow an email.

Angela Swyers suggested putting garden plot applications in folders for the kids at school. All thought it was a great idea. Bruce Crawford said the four page application was too long and intimidating. It was stated that the application is now on a one-sided sheet; rules and guidelines are down to four pages.

Chairman Keegan said he had received correspondence from the Farm Bureau regarding membership. The farmers union is looking for a donation. Agriculture in the Classroom will be rolling out. If anyone is interested there is an article in the New York Times on the meaning of natural organic and another article on food borne illness looking at some of the challenges as far as marketing.

A motion to adjourn was made by Chairwoman Clow and was seconded by Tina Larochelle. All Commission members approved and the meeting ended at 8:10 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: April 14, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. Chairman Keegan said he may not be able to attend the April meeting. Vice Chair Clow will lead the meeting.

Minutes are respectfully submitted by Suzanne Beauchesne