

Town of Boscawen
Agricultural Commission
Meeting Minutes – Draft
Boscawen Municipal Complex – 4th Floor Meeting Room
August 10, 2017 at 7pm

Members Present: John Keegan – Chair, Bill Bevans – Vice-Chair, Rusty Colby, Joshua Marshall, John Porter, Tina Larochelle.

Members Ex-Officio Absent: Roger Sanborn

Alternate Member Absent: Ken Marshall

Others Present: Alan Hardy – Planning & Community Development Director, Katie Phelps – Recording Secretary, Jeff Abbe – Community Garden, Rob Johnson – Guest, Jeremy Delisle – Guest, Adam Mock – Guest, Tom Giovagnoli – Guest, Andy Morrill – Guest, Nathan Mock – Guest.

Chairman Keegan called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with a voting board.

Roll call made by Chairman Keegan.

Review and Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes:

The Commission reviewed meeting minutes from the July 13, 2017 meeting. Commission members suggested edits.

Motion made by Joshua Marshall and seconded by Tina Larochelle to accept the minutes from the June meeting as amended. All in favor.

Accountant's Report:

The Commission reviewed the Treasurer's Report from January 1st thru August 10, 2017. \$2,947.48 has been spent from the Community Garden budget line. Garden plot fees collected to date total \$600.00. \$75 spent from the Administrative budget line.

Motion made by Tina Larochelle and seconded by Joshua Marshall to accept the Accountant's report. All in favor.

Land Use Updates:

- **Discussion of RSA-79-F with Rob Johnson:**

Rob Johnson, Policy Director, with the NH Farm Bureau stepped before the commission to discuss RSA 79-F – *Taxation of Farm Structures and Land under Farm Structures*. This legislation was introduced in 2007 and became effective July 17, 2008. This is enabling legislation which a town would adopt by warrant article or petition at Town Meeting. It encourages the preservation of productive farms and associated structures. If a municipality adopts the program it can be rescinded at a later date. When it's rescinded there is a penalty "use change tax" levied when the land use changes from under farm buildings use to non-qualifying use. Qualifying farm structures must be contiguous with a minimum of 10 acres of open space. The structure must be used exclusively for agriculture which would be determined by a local assessor. Even if a town adopts the legislation an owner must apply to have the land classified. A fee shall be paid by the owner for each parcel to the registrar of deeds for recording the notice of contingent lien. Discussion followed with Commissioners and guests. Possible follow-up action will be discussed at future meetings.

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35 • Recognition of Highway View Farm:

36 Highway View Farm recently took the award for top New Hampshire dairy farm for 2017. The
37 Commission discussed ideas to recognize them for this award. Alan Hardy suggested doing something for
38 Old Home Day. John Porter suggested bringing special attention with a banner for the garage that
39 everyone can see. Joshua Marshall said he would look into the banner and pricing. John Porter also
40 recommended getting permission from the Crete family. Chairman Keegan said he would draft a letter for
41 the Selectmen.

42 **Old Business:**

43 • Agricultural Rack Card:

44 Josh Marshall submitted a revised rack card with edits and a new picture. John Porter noted there is an
45 inconsistency with the use of the “&” sign and the word “and”. Josh will update them. A thousand copies
46 will be printed at Capital Copy using 100lb paper. The 16 racks have been purchased already. Josh
47 Marshall suggested having some available for Old Home Day.

48 • Community Garden – Update:

49 Jeff Abbe said the shed is complete including the window trim. Vents were added in the peak area.

50 There has been over 27 inches of rain since May 22nd. There has been deer and turkey damage, especially
51 to the beans. Jeff thinks the turkeys have been roosting in the pumpkin patch.

52 The push mower is not working and being repaired. John Porter said he would donate a mower that may
53 need some work.

54 The harvest supper is scheduled for September 21st at 6pm at Jeff and Judi Abbe’s house. Jeff invited the
55 Commission members. Jeff suggested a minor edit to the minutes from the last meeting.

56 Jeff wanted to also mention that there were around 40+ students at Merrimack Valley High School who
57 were involved in building the shed.

58 **New Business:**

59 • Jeremy Delisle – UNH Cooperative Extension:

60 Jeremy began his job as an Extension Field Specialist on May 22nd. He also works at the education center
61 in Goffstown. He will be transitioning from part-time to full-time in Merrimack County following the
62 hiring of a replacement in Goffstown. He is part of the fruit and vegetable AOE (area of expertise). He is
63 one of seven in the group that cover programming for the State. His background is in fruit and vegetables
64 and he worked for the Cooperative Extension in North Carolina for 10 years before coming to New
65 Hampshire.

66 He is available to attend meetings to assess needs and develop programming. He is scheduled to give talks
67 at numerous programs in the coming months. There are members on his team that are focused on FSMA
68 (Food Safety Modernization Act). Jeremy’s food safety background in North Carolina was with a food

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safety program called GAPs (Good Agricultural Practices). It's very similar to FSMA's requirements for farmers.

He has started to build relationships with farmers, to learn about their operations, and future plans. He will use this information to figure out what types of programming can help farmers reach their goals.

Jeremy expressed interest in updating the current educational programs in Boscawen or areas the Commission may see as future opportunities. Chairman Keegan said the Town of Boscawen has worked with the Cooperative Extension for our Community Garden program - soils, design, cover crops, IPM, etc. The extension has been a key in helping to develop that program. We've been doing a "First Monday" educational program with Cooperative Extension assistance directed at homeowners across a broad spectrum of agriculture issues such as fruits and berries, IPM, maple, forestry issues, etc. The Commission member who spearheaded the educational program has left the Commission.

Josh Marshall said he has noticed that the need in Boscawen is more for backyard farming. On the commercial side, we have more dairy and hay producers than fruit operations. Jeff Abbe mentioned that Dot Perkins has done many programs. Alan Hardy said when the program was out there people would travel a great distance to attend, so it was not just local people. Jeremy said there is a "speaker's bureau" associated with the Master Gardener program and he has good connections with that program. Discussion ensued. In conclusion, Jeremy agreed to offer the 'Fruits and Berries' presentation on September 11th as the September 'First Monday' program. He will coordinate with the Commission and staff for logistics and support.

Chairman Keegan thanked Jeremy for his time and information and is looking forward to working with him. John Porter has a resource packet from Elaine to share with Jeremy and John Keegan.

- Other:

Alan informed the Commission that Katie Phelps has been transitioning to the position of Accountant and someone new will be hired for the role of Planning & Community Development Clerk and Finance Clerk. If the Commission knows of anyone with interest please send them our way. With that, someone new will also be doing recording secretary duties for the Agricultural Commission.

Chairman Keegan said that Annie Kuster will be at the Cooperative Extension office on Wednesday, August 16th doing a farm bill listening session if anyone is interested in attending.

Rusty Colby has been sworn in as a Commissioner member.

Motion to adjourn made by Joshua Marshall and seconded by John Porter. All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for September 14, 2017 at 7pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Katie Phelps