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Town of Boscawen
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 10th, 2022, at 7:00 PM

Members Present: John Keegan – Chair, John Porter- Vice Chair, Bill Bevans, Ralph O’Dell, Gary Tillman, Julie Fournier -Alternate, and Kara Gallagher-Planning and Community Development Clerk

Introduction of Guest: Completed; one guest: Joe Pustizzi

Absent-Roger Sanborn, Tatyanna Wunschel & Lorrie Carey-Ex Officio

Chair John Keegan opened the public meeting at 7:02 P.M. Commissioner Odell volunteered to record and distribute the task sheet for the upcoming month.

Review and Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Commissioner Gary Tillman motioned to approve the 02.10.22 draft minutes as presented. Seconded by Commissioner John Porter. All in favor. None opposed.

Financial Report:

Commissioner Tillman motioned to approve the Accountant Report through 03.10.22 as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Ralph Odell. All in favor. None opposed.

Commissioner Tillman requested that in the future, detail the nature of each expenditure.

Old Business:

Chair Keegan asked if the Commissioners would object to a revision the Agenda’s order to allow the Pustizzi discussion to become the first order of business. Hearing no objection the change was made.

Proposed Agritourism at the Pustizzi Fruit Farm: Prior to beginning this discussion Chair Keegan informed the Commissioners, in the interest of full disclosure, that he and Mr. Pustizzi share a common property boundary, that they had been business partners in the past and are close friends. If the Commissioners preferred, Vice Chair John Porter would preside over this agenda item. Hearing no motion to change the presider, business resumed. Chair Keegan called the Commissioners and Mr. Pustizzi’s attention to handouts in their meeting packets. Specifically noting that this evening’s discussion is primarily dealing with RSA 21:32-a Agritourism. Infrastructure, life safety and related matters will be the purview of the Technical Review Committee. That is not to say, there will not be areas of overlap, in which case, ask your questions.

Mr. Pustizzi presented the Commissioners with his rationale for dedicating his time and resources to agritourism on approximately 20 acres of his 250 acre property. Mr. Pustizzi showed the Commissioners a map of his property, where each Yurt will be located as well as other buildings

38 on the property. He has investigated short term training models focusing on urban populations
39 in southern New England, New York, and New Jersey, who may be interested in growing crops
40 and raising animals for home consumption or farming in a rural setting. But who don't want to
41 'jump right into it' because they don't know what this means day to day. Mr. Pustizzi plans to
42 offer short term agriculture related trainings, ranging from a weekend to a week year round to
43 individuals or groups of no more than four. Housing would be in one of five rustic Yurt-like
44 structures scattered over a mix of forests and fields roughly a half mile from the farm entrance.
45 Students will leave their vehicle near the barn and walk to their Yurt. Students will provide their
46 own food and utensils, cooking over an open wood fire.

47 Commissioners raised questions about liability, the nature of the training, subject matter, etc. Mr.
48 Pustizzi has investigated the liability issue with his insurance carrier who has given the 'green
49 light' because students will only be using hand tools and only observe the use of power tools and
50 machinery. Examples Mr. Pustizzi pointed to are planting a garden near the yurt he had
51 previously plowed, protecting crops from pests, weeding, harvesting, cleaning and prep for
52 cooking. There are blueberries and fruit trees on the farm to tend and harvest. Evaluating water
53 use, when and what type of irrigation system to use, fertilizing, composting, supporting
54 pollinators and introducing perennials were some of the subject areas mentioned. Maple sugaring
55 and the process of sawing timber into lumber will be included as well as tree identification and
56 basic principles of forest and wildlife management.

57 **Commissioner Porter motioned to accept Joe Pustizzi's project as Agritourism. Seconded**
58 **by Commissioner Bevans. All in favor. None opposed.**

59

60 Other Committee and Commission Reports: Chair Keegan asked the Commission if members on
61 other Committees or Commissions had reports. Commissioner Tillman reported the Planning
62 Board is pleased with the approvals of their warrant articles at Town Meeting. Commissioner
63 John Porter reported that the warrant article for 79-E passed, which gives tax easements for
64 rehabilitating old buildings.

65

66 Farm Bureau Membership: Chair Keegan explained that each Commissioner will be receiving a
67 complete packet of NHFB membership and benefit information.

68

69 Composting Project: Chair Keegan thanked everyone for their support of the project, including
70 time spent at Town Meeting Day. There was not a lot of traffic but several interesting
71 conversations with people who are currently composting at home and want more information.
72 The two educational sessions scheduled in May and June about composting will be conducted in
73 conjunction with the library.
74 Commissioner Porter suggested we continue our educational outreach on Saturdays at the
75 Landfill later this spring. The suggestion was favorably accepted and planning will be done at the
76 April meeting.

77 Sheep Project with OHDC: Commissioner Tillman asked about the project's status. Chair
78 Keegan reported the price of plywood is the sticking point. He will call Lyman Cousens and
79 email the Commissioners the results of the conversation.

80 Rack Cards: They are in and anyone who wants more should contact Kearsten.

81 Gardening with the School System: Commissioner Odell reported on his multiple contacts with
82 MVSD personnel. He suggested the next step should be to organize a meeting where all the
83 players are in one room where we can get a handle on what is happening and how Ag Comm
84 might make a positive contribution.

85 Sanborn Garden: Postponed to the April meeting.

86 **New Business:**

87 Town Meeting Report: See above.

88 Land Use Updates: Postponed to the April meeting.

89

90 **Adjournment:**

91 **Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Bevans. Seconded by Commissioner Odell. All in**
92 **favor. None opposed.**

93 Next Meeting, Thursday, April 14th, 2022 @ 7:00 PM

94 *Respectfully submitted, Kara Gallagher*