

**Town of Boscawen
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, April 14th, 2022, at 7:00 PM**

Members Present: John Keegan—Chair, John Porter—Vice Chair, Bill Bevans, Ralph Odell, Roger Sanborn, Gary Tillman, Alternate Commissioner Tatyanna Wunschel, Lorrie Carey—Ex Officio and PCD Clerk Kara Gallagher,

Absent- Julie Fournier-Alternate

Chair John Keegan opened the public meeting at 7:05 P.M.

Guest: Heather Wunschel

Review and Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Roger Sanborn motioned to approve the 03.10.22 draft minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Gary Tillman. All in favor. None opposed.

PCD Clerk Kara Gallagher requested one change, line 18, replace ‘account’ with ‘accountant’.

Chair John Keegan requested one change, line 20, add ‘in the’ before ‘future’.

PCD Clerk Gallagher requested one change, line 39, insert ‘,’ after ‘New England’ and ‘New York’.

PCD Clerk Gallagher requested one change, line 62, change ‘committee’ to ‘board’.

PCD Clerk Gallagher requested one change, line 70, insert ‘at’ before ‘Town Meeting Day’.

Chair John Keegan requested one change, line 70, change ‘interested’ too ‘interesting’.

PCD Clerk Gallagher requested one change, line 71, ‘information’ should be one word.

PCD Clerk Gallagher requested one change, line 72, change ‘with’ to ‘will’.

PCD Clerk Gallagher requested one change, line 78, correct Lyman’s last name, ‘Cousens’.

PCD Clerk Gallagher requested one change, line 80, insert ‘.’ at the end of the sentence.

Financial Report: Chair Keegan said Finance Director Kate Merrill has presented three options for how she can present the financial report each month. Chair Keegan asked the committee to decide which option they would like to be presented monthly.

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve option two for a monthly accountant report. Seconded by Vice Chair John Porter. All in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Bill Bevans asked about the purchases through Citizens Bank. Mr. Sanborn said they have a Citizens Bank credit card. Mr. Tillman asked if they could include the business at which the card was used. Chair Keegan said Ms. Easler will ask Citizens Bank.

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve the Accountant Report through 04.14.21 as presented with Option 2 and modifications to the Citizens Bank purchases. Seconded by Mr. Bevans. All in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve keeping the Chair and Vice Chair as is for the 2022 Agricultural Commission. Seconded by Mr. Bevans. All in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Tillman will record tasks for next month's meeting.

Old Business:

Chair Keegan said there is no update on the Pustizzi proposal. He has noticed that Mr. Pustizzi is working on the access road going to the yurts.

Mr. Tillman reported that the Planning Board worked on the excavation permit for the Route 3 expansion. Kenney's Garage has until May 30th to be up to date cleaning the property.

Vice Chair Porter said the Economic Development Committee has been discussing the results of 79E passing at Town Meeting. They discovered it is more complex than they realized. They have some paperwork to complete. Administrative staff has helped them put together checklists.

Vice Chair Porter asked when the special Town meeting will take place. Select Board Chair Lorrie Carey said the meeting does not pertain to 79E. The special meeting was called to see if the Town will vote to correct any defects in the posting of the notice of the 2022 Town Meeting and to ratify the actions taken at the meeting in accordance with RSA 31:5-B. The defect is that the Select Board (SB) used electronic signatures on the posted warrants not wet signatures. This year the State is requiring wet signatures on the warrants posted in 2022. The special meeting will be held Friday, April 22nd, at the Boscawen Elementary School at 7pm.

Chair Keegan asked about the status of the kiosk to be located near the Hanna Dustin Memorial. Ms. Carey last heard that the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail were going to take over responsibility for the kiosk. Mr. Jack Shields was their point of contact, and he attended a meeting to discuss the kiosk. Mr. Shields received approval from the State for the kiosk. Ms. Carey was told that Northern Rail Trail was building the kiosk. She has asked Mr. Shields for clarification and an update but hasn't heard back. Ms. Carey said she is willing to donate to the kiosk project, but it is just a question of who will be doing the work. Technically it is on the Hanna Dustin rail trail, and the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail obtained the permits. There was also talk of a larger kiosk with a built-in bench. The person who originally was going to build the kiosk, didn't want to do the bench. The Economic Development Committee thinks the bench is beneficial because there is a bike rack repair station right next to it. It also gives people the option to sit while looking at brochures. Vice Chair Porter said some of the food vending business' they were going to promote are no longer in Boscawen. Chair Keegan said the Commission wants to put rack cards at the kiosk to promote the agricultural aspect of the town. Ms. Carey said there are several places off the rail trail that could be included.

Composting Project: Chair Keegan said the first program will be held at the library on May 17th with a Master Gardener. The second program will be at the library on June 14th. There will be an

article in the Newsvine prior to the May event. Vice Chair Porter asked if they could use the sign at Jamie Welch Park entrance to promote the events. The Town Clerk is in charge of the sign. Chair Keegan will follow-up. Chair Keegan spoke with Mr. Abbe and Ms. Fournier about the composting program at the community garden. Mr. Abbe will be doing the composting presentation with the guidance of an experienced Master Gardener. The total cost for the Master Gardener would be \$77 which includes an honorarium and transportation.

The plan is to build a compost bin with pallets and for the gardeners to use it. The State Department of Environmental Services (DES) has changed their regulations on composting food at unofficial municipal sites. Relevant changes include a maximum 600 square foot composting area and a specific set of users. The users will be the community gardeners. Another limitation is that they won't compost any animal or dairy waste this year. Ms. Paige Wilson, a former member on the Lakes Regional Planning Commission, would like to attend an AgComm meeting and speak with us about recent developments at DES relative to solid waste. She now works for DES and was hired to work with municipalities on solid waste issues, including composting. The Commission is interested in Ms. Wilson attending a meeting. Chair Keegan will extend the invitation. Chair Keegan also spoke with Ms. Suzanne Maze from Black Forest. She will be stocking composting related inventory.

Mr. Sanborn motioned to approve \$77 for honorarium and transportation expenses for the Master Gardener. Seconded by Mr. Tillman. All in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Ralph O'Dell reported that he received emails from teachers at the school. He would like to know what the follow up should be. Chair Keegan suggested the next step would be for Mr. O'Dell to gather all concerned in one room to discuss what would be feasible from the school's perspective. Following the meeting with school representatives, Mr. O'Dell can make a judgement on how best AgComm can support them. Mr. Sanborn offered his time and machinery to help at the schools. Chair Keegan noted that Ms. Wilson has worked with various schools around the State with their composting initiatives. He doesn't know if she has worked with the Merrimack Valley School District. Chair Keegan will send Mr. O'Dell her contact information.

OHDC Sheep Project: Mr. Sanborn brought a cutout sheep to show Commissioners. They have 30 sheep cutouts. He suggested putting reinforcement bars behind them with 1-inch stakes to hold them up. Chair Keegan said he understood that someone at Twiggs Art Gallery would be priming the cutouts. People who purchase them would be able to do their own decorating. He also understood that the cost would be \$15 each. Mr. Sanborn said they got a great deal on materials. The work will be coordinated with the Old Home Day Committee and an artist from Twiggs Gallery. The Agricultural Commission's role is to judge the decorated cutouts. Chair Keegan asked members to consider being a judge. Mr. Bevans volunteered as did Ms. Tatyanna Wunschel, leaving one open slot. Vice Chair Porter asked if there was a theme. Chair Keegan responded that Mr. Lyman Cousens told him themes had been discussed at the last OHDC meeting but he did not recall what they were.

Community Garden: Chair Keegan was researching the history of the community garden and found that they started with 50 plots in 2014. They currently have 96 plots. Their policy has been

to add 10 to 12 plots per year. Part of the reason for the incremental approach is the free water from the Precinct. They don't want to make big jumps in year-to-year water use. They also put in cover crops and take care of some weeds in the expansion area.

Other: Ms. Heather Wunschel presented an idea for a 'Community Agricultural' Day. When she lived in Franklin, they had community days that highlighted the businesses in town. Surrounding areas could also attend for an extra cost. Franklin holds their community days at a park. They spray painted numbered 10x10 squares so when people filled out the paperwork to participate in the event, they were assigned a square for promoting their business. They charged in town businesses \$10 to participate and out of town businesses were \$15 to \$20. The businesses would bring their own table, tents and needed materials. She thinks Boscawen would benefit from this idea to promote the agriculture in Town. April or May were suggested as a time before farmers get busy with planting crops. Ms. Tatyanna Wunschel has connections with Crete's Farm and could possibly get them to bring a couple of calves. Ms. Wunschel also has a connection with miniature horse owner. Her friend takes horses to the Sandwich Fair for kids to decorate. Others in town may have animals and could participate. Ms. Wunschel also suggested asking the Smoke Shack to bring their trailer as a food vendor. In Franklin, they did something similar. It would be a great way for people to explore local food vendors. She noted trash would be an issue but this also has potential to promote other local businesses. Ms. Carey said this idea would be a great fit with what the Economic Development Committee is planning. Deputy PCD Director Kearsten O'Brien has coordinated with Winthrop Carter House to have an event where businesses can explain what they do, showcase it and recruit people for jobs. Many businesses currently need employees. Vice Chair Porter thinks it would be beneficial to try to incorporate agriculture in the event, any way we can. The event is planned for June. Ms. Carey also suggested incorporating agriculture into Old Home Day (OHD). Mrs. Wunschel was concerned with linking it into OHD. She also said a lot of farmers would be in the middle of haying and taking care of crops. Nonetheless, both Ms. Carey and Vice Chair Porter suggested contacting Deputy PCD Director O'Brien to incorporate the idea into the Economic Development event. PCD Clerk Gallagher also suggested attending the Economic Development meeting to present the idea to them.

Ms. Carey asked about an email sent from a couple in town who do crafts out of their home. They have a business that is agriculture related. They sell structures that you can put plants into. PCD Clerk Gallagher said they were looking to do something like a farmers' market. She will ask Deputy PCD Director O'Brien to incorporate them into the Economic Development event.

New Business:

Rack Cards: Chair Keegan said the updated rack cards are available. They are in Deputy PCD Director O'Brien's office and in the display at the Municipal Office entrance. There are also kitchen magnets available, related to the composting project. Ms. Wunschel asked if it would be hard to add another business to the next batch of rack cards. Chair Keegan said when more are needed another business can be added to the new edition. Mr. Tillman observed they won't needed until next spring.

Master Plan: Chair Keegan reported the last update to the Master Plan's Agriculture Chapter was in 2018. The Commission has been asked to review and suggest updates to the 2018 revision. Mr. Tillman has been reviewing it. Chair Keegan asked for other volunteers to participate in the review and converse with Mr. Tillman concerning updates. PCD Director Kellee Easler has asked edits to be submitted in June. Mr. Tillman asked if they are going to update the tables. Mr. Tillman said there is a lot of tables with soil and farmer data. He said 85% of the plan is Kearsarge Regional Food System report. Chair Keegan said they are trying to make this revision reflect what's going on currently. For the tables, they need to examine which farms are still in town using the resources the Commission put into the rack cards. He doesn't think there will be many changes in forest types and soils. He said there are new initiatives that should be incorporated. Mr. Bevans and Vice Chair Porter will help review the Master Plan.

Farmers Market: Mr. Sanborn said his wife, Mrs. Adele Sanborn, have offered their driveway use for a farmers' market on weekends. Ms. Carey stated there were only three places approved for such a market: town hall, municipal building, and the old police station. This is due to insurance issues.

NH Food Alliance Statewide Meeting: Chair Keegan said the NH Food Alliance is an alliance of state-wide agriculture related businesses. The Alliance is having a gathering in May. He asked if any Commissioners would be interested in attending the event in Plymouth. He has attended the event in the past and said it was informative and offers lots of networking opportunities. Various agricultural sectors from producers to wholesalers to vendors and farmers were represented. Cooperative Extension is a major supporter of this event as well as Hannaford Supermarket, Kearsarge Food Help, Northeast Organic Farm Association, NH Community Seaford, the Works Café and more. It is scheduled on Friday, May 13th. Chair Keegan will be attending and asked members to let him know if they are interested.

Experience Rural New Hampshire Brochure: Chair Keegan said the March 28, 2022 deadline has passed. But we can always try for 2023. It is a great opportunity, offered by the State's Department of Agriculture to promote any and all agricultural-related businesses in Boscawen. The businesses themselves need to apply. The Commission's job would be to outreach to local businesses next year.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, May 12th, 2022 @ 7:00 PM

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Sanborn. Seconded by Mr. Tillman. All in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted, Hannah Gardner