

**Town of Boscawen
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 12th, 2022, at 7:00 PM**

Members Present: John Keegan—Chair; John Porter—Vice Chair; Bill Bevans; Ralph Odell; Gary Tillman; Julie Fournier—Alternate; Kara Gallagher—PCD Clerk

Absent- Roger Sanborn and Tatyanna Wunschel—Alternate

Guest Speaker(s): Paige Wilson—Waste Reduction & Diversion Planner

Chair John Keegan opened the public meeting at 7:00 P.M.

Roll Call complete.

Review and Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes: Mr. Gary Tillman requested one change, line 45, change ‘April’ to ‘May’.

Vice Chair John Porter requested one change, line 83, change ‘diary’ to ‘dairy’.

Ms. Julie Fourier requested one change, line 104, strikeout ‘around’ before \$15 each for clarification on exact price.

Mr. Tillman requested one change, line 179, ‘business’ to ‘businesses.’

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve the 04.14.22 draft minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Ralph Odell. All in favor. None opposed.

Financial Report: Mr. Tillman requested to receive a monthly report of expenses. For clarification, the expense breakdown would be for that current month since the previous meeting. Chair Keegan explained the procedure of how the Commission spends money. If a member wants to expend from the budget, PCD Director Kellee Easler has Chair Keegan authorize the expenditure. To help FD Kate Merrill categorize the Citizen’s Bank expenditures, Chair Keegan requested that committee members report items purchased at the subsequent meeting.

Ms. Fournier will record tasks to be completed prior to the Commission’s next meeting.

Old Business: Vice Chair Porter reported that Economic Development didn’t have a quorum for their last scheduled meeting. They are actively working on a ‘Boscawen Business Open House’ for June at the Winthrop Carter House. Mr. Tillman asked if they secured a date. PCD Clerk Kara Gallagher hasn’t received any additional information nor date confirmation.

Mr. Tillman reported that Planning Board discussed updating the Master Plan.

Composting Project: Chair Keegan introduced Ms. Paige Wilson, the Waste Reduction & Diversion Planner under the Solid Waste Management Bureau for NHDES. She has become familiar with the community garden and has discussed composting plans with Chair Keegan and Jeff Abbe. Ms. Wilson presented an overview of the Bureau and what role NHDES plays in writing and updating administrative rules. She did an overview of the composting regulations and detail of how they apply to the Community Garden. Ms. Wilson also discussed, in more general terms, composting rules, previous barriers/challenges and gateways that are now opened with the rules’ update. In NHDES, there is the Waste Management

Division, and, in the division, there are different bureaus. The different bureaus deal with solid waste, asbestos, wastewater, septic contaminated sites, etc. Ms. Wilson explained that law RSA 149-M gives NHDES the authority and right to regulate composting as well as recycling centers and landfills. It also establishes the Waste Management Hierarchy. The EPA food recovery hierarchy is similarly structured in terms of most preferred methods for waste reduction or diversion. The triangle model presented showed that Ms. Wilson's job is to work on source reduction and waste prevention before it becomes waste that needs to be managed later on. Within the law, there are specific rules for how NHDES is to carry out the intent of the law. Ms. Wilson discussed the background of the old rules and how the new rules allow composting of meat and dairy in both permitted as well as permit exempted operations. There is now an emphasis on Best Management Practices which place more trust in the composting process. The classification of compost is compost, as long as it meets universally used standards. There are also exemptions for small scale collection sites. For example, the community garden could be a small scale food waste drop off site, serving as a middle point collection site in the future. Another option is a business could build a pick-up network and manage the food waste at a permanent facility. Ms. Wilson said it is generally easier for people to bring waste from off-site to a central collection point. These community facilities, like the Boscawen Community Garden, which are capped at 600 square feet of space, can accept up to 5-cubic yards of food waste per month. There is a conversion sheet that explains the 'cubic' capacity of a five-gallon bucket. There is a comprehensive composting guide, from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance that Ms. Wilson will share with the Commission. It outlines how to run a community composting site. If a non-licensed collection site hits the licensing threshold and needs a permit, the permit notification is easy and free. NHDES doesn't want to make it hard for people to compost going forward.

Ms. Wilson also clarified that the rules don't regulate the marketing and distribution of the final composted product. Compost is no longer considered a solid waste. Once it meets the specifications referred to earlier, it doesn't need to be managed under the solid waste rules. That doesn't mean the Department of Agriculture may not start regulating compost and other products that don't meet specifications. Ms. Wilson suggested gardeners and home owners put the compost back into their land or another productive use, if possible. Landfills can also use it as cover. The most preferred method is to keep compost in the composting and diversion system. Ms. Wilson also noted that there are no longer stringent requirements or issues with using out-of-state compost. Vice Chair Porter asked if they accept disposing of dead dairy cattle. Ms. Wilson said if it's a natural death it's an exempt action if done on site. Chair Keegan asked if schools around the state compost their waste. Ms. Wilson said Brett School in Tamworth has been composting their kitchen waste for 15 years. To make it work, support is needed from all staff and teachers. Chair Keegan asked if there are community gardens around the state that are composting. Ms. Wilson mentioned Tuftonboro and community gardens in southern areas of the state are composting because there are more interested individuals. There will be a general permit added to the NHDES process which will serve as a registration for gathering information about the extent of composting statewide. It's 'in the works' and would help NHDES track community gardens and similar activities.

Chair Keegan recalled that the Commissioners previously discussed the difficulty of initiating a composting project. They discussed engaging citizen participation, providing simple directions and disposal options other than the landfill. Mr. Jeff Abbe is trying to find two members of his volunteer Community Garden Committee to take on the task of managing the composting program at the garden. The garden is now equipped with a barrel composter in which gardeners can deposit their food scraps. During this growing season, the hope is to gain knowledge on what works, level of gardener participation and feedback from gardeners. The following year begin to gather information on the volume composted

to document impact on the waste stream. Ms. Wilson suggested, when it comes to data collection, to try monitoring the output rather than the intake. The volume will decrease by 60% of input. This is an easier measurement to capture. Discussion ensued.

Chair Keegan spent two hours at the Landfill on Saturday, the 7th. He observed most traffic Saturday was from about 11am to 1pm. He thinks those hours would be the most productive. Some people stopped and talked to him about their interest in composting. Discussion ensued. Vice Chair Porter asked for clarification on where they are trying to get people to compost. Chair Keegan clarified that they are trying to get people to compost at home. At the Community Garden only vegetative matter from gardeners will be composted to avoid attracting animals.

Master Plan Update: Chair Keegan and Vice Chair Porter edited the introduction. They incorporated Mr. Tillman's comments. They are proposing this as the Commission's penultimate draft. Chair Keegan asked Commissioners to review this introduction before next meeting and bring back their feedback. Vice Chair Porter sent a few additional projects to Chair Keegan after the meeting. He asked if there was additional space to include them. There is space. Chair Keegan asked Vice Chair Porter to resend the email to all Commissioners.

Chair Keegan and Vice Chair Porter also reviewed the Research and Objectives Section of the Master Plan. Chair Keegan included edits in the document. He plans to meet with PCD Director Kellee Easler and Deputy PCD Director Kearsten O'Brien this week to update the tables, if possible. Chair Keegan suggested waiting until he speaks with staff prior to discussing the tables. PCD Clerk Gallagher will arrange the meeting date and time. Mr. Tillman asked if Walker Pond would be added to the Conservation land total. Chair Keegan said the difference between the 2014 Plan the updated information is an additional 78 acres. He doesn't know if it includes Walker Pond. Mr. Tillman noted, after reviewing the farms, there are several not displayed on the Rack Cards. Further discussion was deferred to the June meeting.

MVSD Agriculture: Mr. Odell has a meeting next Wednesday, May 18th, at 1:30pm with the person in charge of the planting program at the Elementary School. They specifically picked that day and time because they will be getting ready for a plant sale.

OHDC Sheep Program: Chair Keegan reached out to OHDC members concerning the theme and the sheep judging. Ms. Fournier cannot be a judge because she will be competing. He needs to ask Ms. Wunschel if she or her family plan to participate in the contest. If so, she would have a conflict of interest as well. Ms. Fournier asked if 3 judges are necessary. Chair Keegan said, not necessary but that was the number judging in the cow competition, which worked well. Also, they do not have to be Commissioners, but merely represent the Commission. He will ask staff if anyone is interested in being a judge and asked Commissioners to reach out to people they know. Vice Chair Porter suggested asking a legislative representative because it adds publicity. Chair Keegan will contact the Boscawen legislative representative. Mr. Tillman also suggested asking the Select Board Member.

Community Garden: Chair Keegan reported the Community Garden plots are all taken. There are at least half a dozen plots that have been planted. Many have been tilled. Someone tilled incorrectly, so Mr. Abbe had to repair one of the water lines. Mr. Abbe has made progress with developing a committee to help him with the day to day garden management and is developing ideas for future improvements.

New Business: Chair Keegan has been discussing our meeting schedule and staffing for their meetings with PCD Director Easler. Ms. Easler reported that with the number of committees and commissions PCD personnel staff, it would be more efficient and convenient for meetings to begin as early as possible.

Commission members discussed the accommodation and decided to begin meeting @ 6:30 p.m. PCD Clerk Gallagher reported the Commission may not be staffed consistently while she is on maternity leave. That timespan is anywhere from September to December.

Other: Mr. Bevans asked about the chicken trespassers. Chair Keegan hasn't talked about it with PCD Director Easler since the last meeting, but he has passed on the information Mr. Bevan shared. He said there was actually two or three similar incidents going on at the same time. It is in the Boscawen ordinance that chickens need to be fenced. Discussed ensued. Chair Keegan will follow up on the matter and research related laws and regulations.

Ms. Fournier said the OHDC decided that the parade theme would also be sheep and wool. She asked if AgComm is going to do a float. Chair Keegan doesn't think there is a budget or person power for one.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, June 9th, 2022 @ 6:30 PM.

Adjournment:

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

Respectfully submitted, Hannah Gardner