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**Town of Boscawen
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 14th, 2021 at 7:00 PM**

Members Present: John Keegan – Chair, Julie Fournier, John Porter, Rusty Colby, Josh Marshall

Absent- Bill Bevans–Vice Chair, Kellee-Jo Easler- Planning & Community Development Director, Tina Larochelle

Others Present - Crystal Tuttle- Planning & Community Development Clerk & Hannah Gardner-Recording Secretary

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

Chair Keegan read off the Covid-19 Public Meeting Notice of Telephonic Meetings, which reads as follows: In light of the state of emergency declared by the Governor on March 13, 2020, and to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the chair has determined that an emergency exists and that accordingly, until further notice, (a) members of the board may attend all board meetings telephonically, without the physical presence of a quorum; and (b) members of the public who wish to participate in hearings may, on request, participate telephonically or submit comments in writing to be included in the record of the hearing.

Roll Call: completed and guests introduced.

Review and Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes:

- Ms. Fournier requests one correction, line 37 remove the word “communicator” and change to “Observer”.

Josh Marshall motioned to approve the 11.12.20 minutes as amended. Motion seconded by Rusty Colby. All in favor. None opposed.

Financial Report:

Chair Keegan stated the December 2020 financials showed that the only income is from the Garden plots and there were some expenses for the garden. Chair Keegan stated the major change in the financial report through January 14th, 2021 is the \$300 reduction that the Commission needs to formalize. A motion needs to be made to reduce the \$2000 per year budget to \$1700.

Julie Fournier motioned to accept the 12.10.20 financials as written. Motion seconded by Josh Marshall. All in favor. None opposed.

Rusty Colby motioned to accept the \$300 reduction in the budget. Motion seconded by Josh Marshall. All in favor. None opposed.

40 **John Porter motioned to approve the financial report through January 14th, 2021.**
41 **Motion seconded by Julie Fournier. All in favor. None opposed.**

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43 **Old Business:**

44 • Rail Trail Initiative: Chair Keegan spoke with Ms. Easler about anything going on in
45 the town that could be relative to this idea. She stated the Select Board is in the
46 process of creating an Economic Development Committee. The Rail Trail is one of
47 the issues on that agenda. Among the items discussed are outreach to local merchants,
48 including a survey. Chair Keegan suggested the Select Board look for collaboration
49 with Cooperative Extension for help from Jared Reynolds. Ms. Easler asked if anyone
50 on the AgCom Commission would be interested in becoming a member of the
51 Economic Development Committee. Mr. Porter stated he was interested in talking to
52 Ms. Easler about it more in detail. Ms. Fournier had talked to Mr. Jeff Abbe about
53 how the snowmobiles come up from the rail trail now to go to the Sunoco station to
54 gas up. Mr. Abbe thinks there is a site along King St. near Dunkin Donuts. Ms.
55 Fournier asked if anyone has noticed the sign on King St. that says 'Rail Trail
56 Access'. Mr. Porter thinks the snowmobile trail is more obvious than the bicycle trail
57 for accessing King Street. Mr. Marshall thinks the snowmobile trail is directly across
58 the street from the Sunoco station, in between the house across the street and the
59 cemetery. Mr. Keegan stated Ms. Easler mentioned reaching out to the Conservation
60 Commission in addition to the Agricultural Commission. Mr. Porter stated it would be
61 nice if the Economic Development Committee could tie their initiative into
62 Agricultural. He noted many King Street businesses use local produce. Mr. Porter
63 will develop a local strikethrough message with these restaurants to give them credit
64 for using local produce. Chair Keegan and Ms. Easler talked about promoting the
65 Create's business in some way or adding a new service at the stand they open during
66 the summer. Bicycles come t right onto River Rd. from the Rail Trail.

67

68 • Farm Link: Farm Link Program: Mr. Porter spoke with our contact Jim Hafner,
69 executive Director of *Land for Good*. Mr. Hafner apologized for not having anything
70 in writing, but their office had been hit with COVID. Chair Keegan and Mr. Porter
71 have submitted to *Land for Good* a rough draft of on how to start promoting Farm
72 Link. *Land for Good* asked who would be paying the fee for having notices in the
73 Marketing Bulletin. Mr. Porter has responded it will not be an issue. *Land for Good*
74 staff are drafting an ad for strikethrough in the Marketing Bulletin promoting their
75 service. The Commissioner was open to *Land for Good* having a regular spot. *Land*
76 *for Good* staff is nervous about the wording because they don't offer all of the
77 services contained in our draft staffing being the principal item. Mr. Porter said by
78 next meeting they should have something going.

79

80 • Annual Report: Mr. Marshall edited and finalized the annual report. Chair Keegan thanked all
81 who contributed.

- 82 • Boscawen Town Signs: Mr. Marshall asked if someone could email him a reminder of
83 which signs need replacing. Mr. Porter stated we need apple, blueberry and pumpkin
84 signs. Ms. Fournier added that one of each kind is needed. Mr. Marshall will submit the
85 order to Prison Industries.
- 86 • Chair Keegan reported a Community Garden Committee meeting is scheduled for
87 February 8th, Ms. Fournier as well as Mr. Jeff Abbe will be in attendance. They will be
88 updating the paperwork for the next community garden season as well as discuss
89 expanding the garden again. The number of new plots is unclear at this time. In
90 addition, the numbering system will be revamped to accommodate this and future
91 expansions, if a member has an idea, please email Chair Keegan or Ms. Fournier so
92 they can add it to the meeting's agenda.
93

94 **New Business:**

- 95 • Agricultural Community: Monadnock Region: Chair Keegan attended virtual event
96 to promote and celebrate agriculture in the Monadnock Region. He was very
97 impressed with both the depth and breadth of the community wide agricultural action
98 that takes place in the Monadnock Region. Four different individuals talked about
99 their enterprises. One person was a restaurant owner, another a producer, one woman
100 organized and ran community gardens and educated children and another speaker
101 had been Chair of the NH House Agricultural Committee and spoke about systemic
102 issues. It was very well done and engaging. Chair Keegan asked if anyone had seen
103 the program or had comments. Ms. Fournier asked where Chair Keegan heard about
104 it. It was on the Market Bulletin. Mr. Marshall could not attend but stated they do an
105 amazing job. Mr. Porter reinforced that sentiment and reminded Commissioners he
106 had spoken with them and was very impressed. There were about 70 individuals on
107 Zoom.
- 108 • Farm Bureau National Convention: Mr. Marshall stated every year the American Farm
109 Bureau holds a convention. It is a great opportunity for farmers around the country to
110 take a week off from work and get together. They did a great job transitioning to a
111 virtual convention this year. What you miss in the virtual convention is what's not the
112 agenda: being in a hotel with other farmers and making connections, walking around
113 and seeing other farmers. With the virtual convention they did a good job of having
114 everything live but also accessible on 'On Demand'. They had speakers such as a retired
115 Navy Seal, Mike Rowe (Dirty Jobs) and the CEO of Land O' Lakes. The Delegates
116 session was even harder to do because there are hundreds of individuals debating policy.
117 They did a great job virtually considering they have never done it before. Mr. Porter
118 participated for specific event/presentations over three and a half days. He believed the
119 speakers were very enlightening. The debate teams and discussion teams were very
120 impressive. Everyone was very courteous to one another; they were trying to create a
121 discussion. He felt like the technology didn't take away from the convention. The one
122 word he took away from the convention was 'pivoting'. It is the term for what people
123 are doing to respond to COVID on their farms. A lot of the workshops had to do with

124 marketing and value added. Mr. Marshall stated we take for granted the idea of someone
125 driving to your farm and purchasing from the farmer directly. This is very foreign to a
126 lot of sectors of agricultural and across the country. People from Virginia, Iowa and
127 Nebraska are always amazed that NH has farms that are on 20 acres and are able to
128 make a living selling carrots and beets. He referred to Mr. Porter talking about pivoting
129 shows that some of these folks have never considered selling a product from their farm
130 or had to do it. We may look at other parts of the country and think they have way more
131 agricultural than we do but they look to us and are impressed with what our farmers do
132 accomplish.

133

134 • Chair Keegan follows the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), which
135 monitors and lobbies for federal policies supporting small and medium size farmers.
136 They are gearing up to support new programming focused on regional markets, farm to
137 customer, value add and financing through the Department of Agricultural for small
138 producers. Their weekly publication is available on the Internet where they layout
139 proposals being made to the incoming Administration relative to smaller producers.

140

141 • Mr. Porter stated that on February 12th and 13th, the kick-off of the Virtual NH and
142 Forest Exposition will begin. There will be key speakers during the day and then they
143 will kick off the series of videos that will be offered monthly the rest of the year. There
144 will be a virtual trade show of just business cards to give publicity to their Agriculture
145 businesses. They are struggling to make it work because of COVID and their limited
146 budget. Mr. Marshall said he spoke with Gail McWilliam and sent her a link to the Farm
147 Bureau video page. They have a ton of videos that may be useful.

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149 • **Next Meeting:** February 11th, 2021 at 7 P.M.

150

151 **Adjournment:**

152 • Motion to adjourn by Mr. Colby; seconded by Ms. Fournier. All in favor. None opposed.

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154 *Respectfully submitted, Hannah Gardner*