

Town of Boscawen
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, June 10th, 2021, at 7:00 PM

Members Present: John Keegan – Chair, Bill Bevans, Julie Fournier, John Porter- Vice Chair, Roger Sanborn & Gary Tillman

Absent- Tina Larochelle

Others Present - Crystal Tuttle- Planning & Community Development Clerk & Ralph Odell

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:

- Chair Keegan requests one correction, line 63, strikethrough “to” and add “into”.
- Mr. Bevan’s requests one correction, line 68, add “the community”.
- Chair Keegan requests one correction, line 87, add “.”, after “sense”.
- Chair Keegan requests one correction, line 102, and change “she” to “their”.
- Chair Keegan requests one correction, line 102, add “.”, after “UNH”.
- Chair Keegan requests one correction, line 102, add “So,” before “she has a pool...”
- Chair Keegan requests one correction, line 109, strikethrough “of”.
- Ms. Fournier requests one correction, line 122, add “be” after “should”.
- Chair Keegan requests one correction, line 156, add “also” before “selling”.
- Chair Keegan requests one correction, line 160, change “venture” to “adventure” and add “if it’s” before “owned”.
- Chair Keegan requests one correction, line 169, add “of” before “in terms”.
- Chair Keegan requests one correction, line 212, add “and” before “would still require...”

- 38 • Chair Keegan requests one change, line 229, add “for a Circle Committee update”
39 after “request”.
- 40 • Chair Keegan requests one change, line 248, this is a motion which should be in bold
41 type.

42 **Mr. Bevans motioned to accept the 05.13.21 meeting minutes as amended. Motion**
43 **seconded by Mr. Sanborn. All in favor. None opposed.**

44 **Financial Report:** Chair Keegan reported the only thing that changes month to month is the
45 income from the Community Garden.

46 **Mr. Tillman motioned to accept the 06.10.21 financials as written. Motion seconded by**
47 **Mr. Sanborn. All in favor. None opposed.**

48 **Old Business:**

- 49 • *Land for Good:* Mr. Porter received a blog post in which *Land for Good* had given credit
50 to Commissioner Jasper for promoting *Land for Good*. Mr. Porter forwarded the blog
51 post to him. He asked Commissioner Jasper to reinstate the promotions which he agreed
52 to do. Chair Keegan also noted *Land for Good* recognized the support of this AgComm
53 for our work. Ms. Tuttle and Ms. Phelps are working to post all the advertisements for
54 *Land for Good*. There are links within them they are still working to embed.
- 55 • *Economic Development Committee:* Mr. Porter continues to represent the Commission
56 on the Economic Development Committee. As of now, they have decided to meet at
57 different local businesses for each meeting. This week they toured Avaloch Farm. They
58 are still talking about long-range ideas that may appear on warrant articles aimed at grant
59 funding or policy changes to enable Town support for business development. The
60 Committee is also developing a business survey, which members would hand deliver.
61 They want businesses’ input on several items including what they think can be done to
62 improve business environments, publicity, and Town support. Work continues to finalize
63 their idea for a larger kiosk on the Northern Rail Trail. Currently the idea is to have 1 or 2
64 rack card holders for AgComm and other businesses’ pamphlets. Mr. Bevans asked what
65 the business of the Music Institute is at this point. Mr. Porter stated COVID has had a
66 major impact, and because of it, they are delaying this year’s season. Nothing will happen
67 until around August. They are looking at using the facilities for conferencing, which they
68 were approved to do in the Town’s permitting but have yet to implement.
- 69 • *Composting:* Ms. Fournier reported on the food waste issue. She and Ms. Tuttle are
70 focusing on home composting. In addition, they are considering educating homeowners
71 on how to take food waste out of the transfer station waste stream. They exchanged
72 information which they will be discussing. Mr. Sanborn and Mr. Bevans recommended
73 connecting with the Boscawen Elementary School. Mr. Porter suggested adding another
74 sign along Marlboro Rd. promoting composting. Ms. Tuttle will ask Mr. Hollins about
75 the idea. Ms. Fournier will work on designing a sign with Ms. Tuttle. Mr. Odell
76 questioned if the Boscawen Elementary School currently teaches children about
77 composting. He knows it is incorporated into the Loudon Elementary School’s

78 curriculum. This could be another way of promoting home composting. Ms. Tuttle can
 79 ask some of the employees in the office that live in Loudon about how their school
 80 district incorporated composting into their curriculum.

- 81 • Community Garden: Ms. Fournier reported that the Community Garden received a
 82 donated riding tractor. Mr. Abbe thinks it needs a carbonator and is working to get it
 83 running. The Community Garden is at about 95% capacity. All the planted gardens are
 84 doing great. Some plots have been paid for but not planted. Mr. Abbe said the pollinator
 85 hotel needs work. Ms. Fournier suggested making it into an educational program focused
 86 on Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The Merrimack County Conservation District
 87 donated pepper, tomato, and onions plants. If they aren't taken by gardeners, Mr. Abbe
 88 plans to plant them in the Community Garden and donate the produce to local food
 89 pantries. Chair Keegan would like to increase the number of volunteers working with Mr.
 90 Abbe. Mr. Sanborn suggested writing a 'Thank You' card to Mr. Abbe on a regular basis.
 91 All agreed.
- 92 • Site Visit: Chair Keegan had a follow-up conversation with Chris Walden. The
 93 Commission members opened his eyes to a set of issues that he hadn't thought through.
 94 Mr. Walden is focused on his passion to brew his own beer, not agriculture. He realized,
 95 after meeting with the Commissioners, that it would be more work to incorporate
 96 agricultural production into his plans. Chair Keegan left Mr. Walden with the option of
 97 having Commissioners do a walkthrough.
- 98 • Rack Cards: Ms. Fournier brought up the need to update the Rack Card. This would tie
 99 into Mr. Porter's work with the Economic Development Committee. Ms. Fournier is new
 100 to the Commission and had questions about the card's development. She asked for input
 101 on what needs editing, possible additions, and such. Mr. Porter suggested the AgComm
 102 do the updates and then offer the new version to the Economic Development Committee.
 103 Chair Keegan will call Josh Marshall to ask about the production history and related
 104 matters, i.e., budget. Mr. Sanborn suggested updating the photo because the current photo
 105 it is out-of-date. The major tasks will be contacting the individuals listed on the rack card,
 106 updating their information, and identifying new agricultural enterprises in town. The
 107 Commissioners split up the current businesses listed on the card to contact for updates.
 108 Ms. Tuttle will send a PDF to the Committee members identifying which businesses each
 109 member needs to contact. Mr. Bevans talk to Ms. Blake, News Vine editor, concerning an
 110 article publicizing the update and asking new farmers to contact Ms. Tuttle at the town
 111 office. Mr. Tillman suggested posting it on the website too. Chair Keegan asked Ms.
 112 Fournier to make a question template so everyone gets complete and consistent
 113 information.
- 114 • Commissioner Education: Chair Keegan asked about issues identified in the 'How Ag
 115 Friendly Is Your Town' survey and suggested that members read the Master Plan's
 116 Agricultural Chapter. These will both raise questions that will be helpful when it comes
 117 time to update this Chapter and is also good information to consider as the
 118 Commissioners make decisions.

119 **New Business:**

- 120 • New Member: Chair Keegan asked the Commissioners to discuss inviting Ralph Odell to
 121 become an Alternate Agricultural Commissioner. Discussion followed with Mr. Odell

122 concerning his background and interests. One item, the beginning of his service was not
123 clear. This was left pending a follow-up conversation between Chair Keegan and Ms.
124 Easler.

125 **Mr. Sanborn motioned to approve Ralph Odell as an Alternate Commissioner of the**
126 **AgCom Committee. Seconded by Mr. Porter. All in favor. None opposed.**

- 127 • Rat Control: Chair Keegan reported Ms. Easler is asking for information and/or insight
128 on rat control from Commissioners who have had chickens or farm work experience. Mr.
129 Sanborn suggested rat poison, which works well, tucked into the green bales of hay or
130 other 'hidden locations' but to keep an eye on it. Mr. Porter said you must hide it so other
131 animals can't get to it. Mr. Porter suggested going to a professional exterminator. Ms.
132 Fournier reported the average exterminator cost is around \$300. She also reported there is
133 a ton of information on the internet and passed around hard copies of some materials she
134 had downloaded. Chair Keegan asked her to give them to Ms. Tuttle for Ms. Easler. Ms.
135 Fournier would like the Commission's involvement to be as minimal as possible and
136 educationally focused. Mr. Bevans said knowing the section of Town involved might
137 enable the Commissioners to be more helpful. Chair Keegan recapped saying Ms. Tuttle
138 provide Ms. Easler the written information and a summary of this discussion which she
139 can use as needed.
- 140 • Twiggs Agricultural Event: Mr. Sanborn announced on June 26th Ms. Adele Sanborn is
141 offering a Twiggs Gallery Event related to agriculture and all are invited. Ms. Fournier
142 said the event is called 'Art Fest'. Among the attractions will be a sheep dog
143 demonstration, an obstacle course teaching people how to drive a work horse and antique
144 tools from the Sanborn Farm.

145 **Next Meeting:**

- 146 • Thursday, July 8th, 2021 @ 7pm.

147 **Adjournment:**

- 148 • **Motion to adjourn by Mr. Tillman; Seconded by Mr. Sanborn. All in favor. None**
149 **opposed.**

150 *Respectfully submitted, Hannah Gardner*