

Town of Boscawen
Agricultural Commission
Meeting Minutes – Draft
Boscawen Municipal Complex
September 13, 2018 7:00 pm

1 Members Present: John Keegan – Chair, John Porter, Julie Fournier, Tina Larochelle and Rusty
2 Colby

3 Members Absent: Bill Bevans-Vice Chair and Josh Marshall

4 Others Present: Alan Hardy-Co-Administrator, Linda Chandonnet – Recording Secretary

5 Chairman Keegan called the meeting to order at 7:04pm.

6 Roll call made by Chair Keegan.

7 **Review and Acceptance of prior meeting’s minutes:**

8 Chair Keegan asked if anyone had any changes to the minutes from 08/09/2018. The following
9 changes were made: Line 98 – Change date to September 13, 2018.

10 **Motion made to accept the August minutes as amended by Mr. Porter and seconded by Ms.**
11 **Larochelle. All in favor, none opposed.**

12 Accountant Report was reviewed by the Commission. Chair Keegan mentioned that the \$500.00
13 Bode Donation has been deposited. Ms. Larochelle asked if the money can be spent and Chair
14 Keegan replied; yes, but in order for the town to accept it, the money would have to be designated
15 for a very specific use and go into s trust fund.

16 **Motion made to accept the Accountant Report by Ms. Larochelle and seconded by Ms.**
17 **Fournier. All in favor, none opposed.**

18 **Commissioners Visit:**

19 Chair Keegan said when he had last talked to Commissioner Jasper, they had decided to set aside
20 two dates, September 17th as the primary and a backup date of September 24th. Currently the
21 primary date is OK. The question is how to manage the visit. As discussed at last month’s meeting,
22 the plan is for a short visit to Mr. Porter and Mr. Marshall’s farms. Mr. Porter suggested that
23 Commissioner Jasper might hop on the chopper tractor at Crete’s for a ride to experience
24 harvesting as the rows of corn are coming at you. Chair Keegan said he can meet the Commissioner
25 at 8:15 at Hannah Dustin Park and Ride on the 17th. From there everyone will meet at Mr. Porter’s
26 house at 8:30. Other stops discussed were Highway View, Tom Giovagnoli egg farm and various
27 Water Street sites, perhaps including Avaloch Farm Music Institute ending at Richardson’s. Chair
28 Keegan mentioned that he will only be available until noon. Mr. Colby offered to give the
29 Commissioner a ride back to his vehicle from Richardson’s when the tour is finished. Chair Keegan
30 stated it will happen rain or shine. He will reach out to Mr. Marshall and keep him updated.

31 **Farm Tax Relief Bill:**

32 Chair Keegan mentioned that Mr. Porter was on NPR public radio’s The Exchange today at 9:00am
33 and was on about barns along with two other members of the Barn Committee.

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34 Mr. Porter stated that today Mr. Marshall and others from farm Bureau met with Senator Watters
35 to follow up on the tax relief bill. This is to provide tax relief for owners in the first few years that
36 a new agricultural structure is built. The idea is, if possible, to match this up with a payback period.
37 Senator Watters, was a key sponsor of RSA 79E and is logical partner to work on similar tax relief
38 for farmers. Mr. Porter and Mr. Marshall met with the Senator over a month ago. *See August 2016*
39 *minutes for details.* Today’s meeting was very informal and just a touch base meeting. Senator
40 Watters has talked to a few senators and legislatures and said feedback has been positive so far.
41 There is another tentative meeting scheduled of November 8th, 2:00pm at N.H. Farm Bureau. The
42 goal is for Rob Johnson to have roughed out bill modeled on RSA 79E. Senator Watters thinks
43 this is a good approach, there is not much resistance and he thinks support can be bipartisan.
44 Senator Watters has asked Mr. Marshall to find support from agriculture friendly legislators and
45 to involve both parties. Senator Watters is shooting for December or January to start working the
46 draft into the legislative system. Key items Senator Watters keeps in the foreground are that this
47 is enabling legislation and that we leave the option in for deferred or forgiven taxes. Senator
48 Watters also wants to make sure this doesn’t look like RSA 79E. He wants to avoid any confusion
49 for the 79E supporters. The only concern he has identified is if a borderline agricultural business
50 tries to take advantage of this legislation. Mr. Porter added that Senator Watters realizes that this
51 legislation is not going to save farms in New Hampshire, but it shows a friendliness for Agriculture
52 and might promote young folks who are overwhelmed with their taxes and need a hand up during
53 the first few years farming. Chair Keegan added that this would be an important conversation to
54 have with Commissioner Jasper during his visit along with asking his support for the idea of
55 training appraisers about the tax realities for agricultural structures.

56 **Other Land Use Issues:**

57
58 Mr. Hardy stated the Town of Boscawen has submitted an application to the Department Of
59 Transportation through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for \$463,000.00 towards
60 the acquisition of the last 6/10ths of a mile of the Northern Rail Trail. The process has not gone as
61 expected. Town officials thought the State would jump in and assert jurisdiction, as they have the
62 right of first refusal, but this has yet to happen Jack Shields from Friends of the Northern Rail Trail
63 in Merrimack County (FNRT) has also been heavily involved in this process. We have the support
64 of FNRT which has been successful at fund raising. The grant does require a 20% local match.
65 One way or another we could end up acquiring the last Pan Am section in Boscawen and have the
66 Rail Trail complete to Hannah Dustin Island with, possibly, a parking lot. A decision will be made
67 by January 2019.

68 Mr. Hardy gave an update on the override votes in the Legislature. The bio-mass bill veto was
69 over-turned but not the net-metering veto. This means net-metering is back to square one. There
70 may be another attempt to pass this in the upcoming legislative session.

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71 **Old Business:**

72 Chair Keegan stated there were no awards given on Tuesday at the Boscawen Old Home Day
73 volunteer recognition because there were no recommendations. However, on Thursday there was
74 a very nice gathering of about 20 people at the Boscawen Community Garden including several of
75 Josh Marshall's family, a selectmen and several gardeners as well as friends to honor of Ken
76 Marshall. Josh Marshall read a very nice piece he had written about Ken and presented the plaque
77 to family members. People the shared 'Ken stories'. It was a very 'personal' event. Everyone
78 there liked the large stone that was placed in Ken's honor.

79 Chair Keegan asked the Board Members if they received the email regarding the lettering to be
80 sandblasted on the Community Garden stone. All agreed the 4 inch letters all in capital letters
81 would be best with black lettering. The end result would read: Ken Marshall Memorial Garden
82 and 2018 written under and centered. The quote from Perry Bros. Monuments was \$730.00.

83 **Motion made by John Porter and seconded by Tina Larochelle to vote on the Ken Marshall**
84 **Memorial for \$730.00. All in favor, none opposed.**

85 Tina Larochelle mentioned she would like to see her late husband, David, who passed away this
86 year, be remembered for his positive contributions to the town. Mr. Larochelle farmed in
87 Boscawen for 41 years. He beautified the town; worked educating children about agriculture in
88 general but orchards and apple growing in particular. He did this in talks at schools, at 4H meetings
89 and visits to his orchards. Commissioners asked Tina to write something in more detail chronicling
90 David's contributions so the Commission can proceed with a better understanding of David's
91 impact.

92 Chair Keegan reminded Commissioners that at our last meeting we discussed the idea of an annual
93 recognition of volunteers and townspeople who make outstanding contributions to the town. He
94 has spoken to BCC Chair Tom Gilmore who supports the idea of a join project. Chair Keegan
95 asked if a Commissioner would like to take leadership for this project. Mr. Larochelle service
96 recognition could be part of a future Boscawen Old Home Day's recognition ceremony.

97 **Community Garden:**

98 Chair Keegan he received a letter from Jeff Abbe who reported there was very high use of the
99 Community Garden this year. There is a continuing challenge of finding people to volunteer to
100 help with tasks such as mowing and weed whacking to keep the garden in good shape. Chair
101 Keegan suggested maybe if there was some recognition, more people would help. Mr. Abbe noted
102 the irrigation system continues to perform very well for the garden. Maintaining the ground with
103 the help of Mr. Hollins and his crew continues to work well. The area where they thought they
104 killed the Japanese Knotweed is still a problem. Mr. Towle will be asked to spray it again. Mr.
105 Abbe is asking if anyone has a broad fork tool for use at the garden. Mr. Porter has offered to
106 donate one to the Community garden. Mr. Abbe will need a map of the Community Garden plots.

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107 We will send current gardeners a letter asking if they are interested in retaining the same plot(s) in
108 2019. Chair Keegan stated Mr. Abbe and Frank Laro are the two principle volunteers overseeing
109 of the garden. They do a great job.

110 Mr. Hardy briefly revisited the Brode Fund to explain how the town can accept such gifts. The
111 money will be placed in a trust created by a vote at town meeting and the funds will be available
112 to use at the community garden.

113 Chair Keegan mentioned that four years ago the Commission received a grant to study the
114 feasibility of a community kitchen in Boscawen or another nearby town. The consultant hired for
115 the economic study determined it was not feasible in Boscawen, but a possibility in the Warner-
116 Bradford area. Some of the folks who were part of that discussion now have an operation going in
117 Bradford where they are buying, selling and producing vegetables. It is called Sweet Beet Market
118 and is located at 11 West Main Street in Bradford. They offer meat, dairy, eggs, baked goods and
119 a variety of other artisan goods from growers and producers within a 30 mile radius. The store
120 location has expanded and has added a café, bakery and a commercial kitchen opening this
121 summer. Might be an interesting visit.

122 The next meeting of the Commission will be held on Thursday, October 11, 2018.

123

124 **Motion to adjourn made by Ms. Laroche and seconded by Mr. Colby. All in favor, none**
125 **opposed.**

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127 The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

128

129 *Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Chandonnet*

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