

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.

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

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

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

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

Old Business:

- Land for Good: Mr. Porter received a blog post in which *Land for Good* had given credit to Commissioner Jasper for promoting *Land for Good*. Mr. Porter forwarded the blog post to him. He asked Commissioner Jasper to reinstate the promotions which he agreed to do. Chair Keegan also noted *Land for Good* recognized the support of this AgComm for our work. Ms. Tuttle and Ms. Phelps are working to post all the advertisements for *Land for Good*. There are links within them they are still working to embed.
- Economic Development Committee: Mr. Porter continues to represent the Commission on the Economic Development Committee. As of now, they have decided to meet at different local businesses for each meeting. This week they toured Avaloch Farm. They are still talking about long-range ideas that may appear on warrant articles aimed at grant funding or policy changes to enable Town support for business development. The Committee is also developing a business survey, which members would hand deliver. They want businesses' input on several items including what they think can be done to improve business environments, publicity, and Town support. Work continues to finalize their idea for a larger kiosk on the Northern Rail Trail. Currently the idea is to have 1 or 2 rack card holders for AgComm and other businesses' pamphlets. Mr. Bevans asked what the business of the Music Institute is at this point. Mr. Porter stated COVID has had a major impact, and because of it, they are delaying this year's season. Nothing will happen until around August. They are looking at using the facilities for conferencing, which they were approved to do in the Town's permitting but have yet to implement.
- Composting: Ms. Fournier reported on the food waste issue. She and Ms. Tuttle are focusing on home composting. In addition, they are considering educating homeowners on how to take food waste out of the transfer station waste stream. They exchanged information which they will be discussing. Mr. Sanborn and Mr. Bevans recommended connecting with the Boscawen Elementary School. Mr. Porter suggested adding another sign along Marlboro Rd. promoting composting. Ms. Tuttle will ask Mr. Hollins about the idea. Ms. Fournier will work on designing a sign with Ms. Tuttle. Mr. Odell questioned if the Boscawen Elementary School currently teaches children about composting. He knows it is incorporated into the Loudon Elementary School's curriculum. This could be another way of promoting home composting. Ms. Tuttle can ask some of the employees in the office that live in Loudon about how their school district incorporated composting into their curriculum.
- Community Garden: Ms. Fournier reported that the Community Garden received a donated riding tractor. Mr. Abbe thinks it needs a carburetor and is working to get it running. The Community Garden is at about 95% capacity. All the planted gardens are doing great. Some plots have been paid for but not planted. Mr. Abbe said the pollinator hotel needs work. Ms. Fournier suggested making it into an educational program focused

on Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The Merrimack County Conservation District donated pepper, tomato, and onions plants. If they aren't taken by gardeners, Mr. Abbe plans to plant them in the Community Garden and donate the produce to local food pantries. Chair Keegan would like to increase the number of volunteers working with Mr. Abbe. Mr. Sanborn suggested writing a 'Thank You' card to Mr. Abbe on a regular basis. All agreed.

- Site Visit: Chair Keegan had a follow-up conversation with Chris Walden. The Commission members opened his eyes to a set of issues that he hadn't thought through. Mr. Walden is focused on his passion to brew his own beer, not agriculture. He realized, after meeting with the Commissioners, that it would be more work to incorporate agricultural production into his plans. Chair Keegan left Mr. Walden with the option of having Commissioners do a walkthrough.
- Rack Cards: Ms. Fournier brought up the need to update the Rack Card. This would tie into Mr. Porter's work with the Economic Development Committee. Ms. Fournier had questions about the card's development. She asked for input on what needs editing, possible additions, and such. Mr. Porter suggested the AgComm do the updates and then offer the new version to the Economic Development Committee. Chair Keegan will call Josh Marshall to ask about the production history and related matters, i.e., budget. Mr. Sanborn suggested updating the photo because the current photo it is out-of-date. The major tasks will be contacting the individuals listed on the rack card, updating their information, and identifying new agricultural enterprises in town. The Commissioners split up the current businesses listed on the card to contact for updates. Ms. Tuttle will send a PDF to the Committee members identifying which businesses each member needs to contact. Mr. Bevans talk to Ms. Blake, News Vine editor, concerning an article publicizing the update and asking new farmers to contact Ms. Tuttle at the town office. Mr. Tillman suggested posting it on the website too. Chair Keegan asked Ms. Fournier to make a question template so everyone gets complete and consistent information.
- Commissioner Education: Chair Keegan asked about issues identified in the 'How Ag Friendly Is Your Town' survey and suggested that members read the Master Plan's Agricultural Chapter. These will both raise questions that will be helpful when it comes time to update this Chapter and is also good information to consider as the Commissioners make decisions.

New Business:

- New Member: Chair Keegan asked the Commissioners to discuss inviting Ralph Odell to become an Agricultural Commissioner. Discussion followed with Mr. Odell concerning his background and interests. One item, the beginning of his service was not clear. This was left pending a follow-up conversion between Chair Keegan and Ms. Easler.

Mr. Sanborn motioned to approve Ralph Odell as a Commissioner of the AgCom Committee. Seconded by Mr. Porter. All in favor. None opposed.

- Rat Control: Chair Keegan reported Ms. Easler is asking for information and/or insight on rat control from Commissioners who have had chickens or farm work experience. Mr. Porter said you must hide it so other animals can't get to it. Mr. Sanborn suggested rat

poison, which works well, tucked into other hidden locations. Mr. Porter suggested going to a professional exterminator. Ms. Fournier reported the average exterminator cost is around \$300. She also reported there is a ton of information on the internet and passed around hard copies of some materials she had downloaded. Chair Keegan asked her to give them to Ms. Tuttle for Ms. Easler. Ms. Fournier would like the Commission's involvement to be as minimal as possible and educationally focused. Mr. Bevans said knowing the section of Town involved might enable the Commissioners to be more helpful. Chair Keegan recapped saying Ms. Tuttle provide Ms. Easler the written information and a summary of this discussion which she can use as needed.

- Twiggs Agricultural Event: Mr. Sanborn announced on June 26th Ms. Adele Sanborn is offering a Twiggs Gallery Event related to agriculture and all are invited. Ms. Fournier said the event is called 'Art Fest'. Among the attractions will be a sheep dog demonstration, an obstacle course teaching people how to drive a work horse and antique tools from the Sanborn Farm.

Next Meeting:

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

Adjournment:

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

Respectfully submitted, Hannah Gardner