

Town of Boscawen
Agricultural Commission
Meeting Minutes – Final
Boscawen Municipal Complex
July 12, 2018 7:00 pm

Members Present: John Keegan – Chair, Bill Bevans, Josh Marshall, John Porter, Tina Laroche

Members Absent: Rusty Colby

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

Guest: Julie Fournier

Chairman Keegan called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

Roll call made by Chair Keegan.

Review and Acceptance of prior meeting's minutes:

Chair Keegan asked if anyone had any changes to the previous minutes from 06/14/2018. The following changes were made: Line 65 & 66– Change the motion to Mr. Bevans and seconded by Mr. Marshall.

Motion made to accept the June minutes by Mr. Bevans and seconded by Mr. Marshall as amended. All in favor, none opposed.

Accountant Report was reviewed by the board with no comments.

Motion made to accept the Accountant Report by Ms. Laroche and seconded by Mr. Bevans. All in favor, none opposed.

Land Use Happenings:

Chair Keegan spoke concerning Tax Incentive Issues and NH Senator Watters whom he is still waiting to hear from. In the meantime Chair Keegan has looked at Senator Watters website and saw he was a sponsor of the bill last year to appropriate the 3 million dollars to the dairy farmers. There has also been an interview with him in the NH Business Review that indicated he has been focused on environment issues, water quality and things of that nature, especially related to the Seacoast.

Mr. Porter stated he thinks, as do others, we are right on target with this issue. He has talked to people about this and they think it makes sense. Chair Keegan agreed and said we need to keep pursuing it. Mr. Marshall noted he took a tour of dairy farms with Commissioner Jasper. Farmers across the state are facing the issue of how to get some tax relief or other help. He mentioned some states are helping dairy farmers. He fears that if New Hampshire does not do something soon or lags behind in agriculture or forest industries support that we will see a reduction of agriculture. Hopefully, we can not only help Boscawen but the entire state.

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Other Business:

Chair Keegan asked Mr. Hardy to give an update on Boscawen Conservation Commission (BCC) projects.

- Mr. Hardy reported the BBC has completed part of the town forest project and are planning additional timber harvests and infrastructure upgrades.

- Mr. Hardy stated there are two new projects. One is the intent to acquire a 25 acre parcel of land between Tina Larochelle's Farm and Walker Pond from the Water Precinct. It goes up all the way to Fred Tauber's land and includes the 2 Boscawen accesses to Walker Pond. This would permanently preserve that land once in the BCC hands and limit future use. For example, public access to the pond and improved picnic area. Since the BCC it is a town organization the selectmen could have public works improve access to the pond without putting the Class 6 Roads status at risk. The BCC is in negotiating with the Precinct.

- A property owner on Long Street and Water Street has approached the BCC about an agriculture preservation easement. The value of the easement is being established. This is a beautiful parcel to preserve because it is among some of the best agriculture land in Boscawen. It is anticipated other parties will need to help with the fund raising because the BCC's available funds will not be enough to cover the costs. If successful, a land corridor from Walker Pond along the west side of Water and Long Streets will largely be protected open space.

Chair Keegan stated that at some point the Agricultural Commission is going to become involved in the easement process. He also said that Monday morning, July 16th, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Gilmore and he were going to meet to talk in more detail about the BCC's plans and how best the Agriculture Commission could assist the BCC.

Chair Keegan said the other agenda item is related to the Ken Marshall Memorial. Chair Keegan would like to propose that each year for Old Home Week the Agricultural and Conservation Commissions identify a volunteer or someone actively involved in Agriculture/Conservation who has made an outstanding contribution to the community. Recognitions would be during the awards ceremony on Tuesday.

Mr. Hardy added that these two organizations will be coming together for projects in the town forest. For example, they will look at restoring fields. The BCC has two more timber harvests planned to do to improve the forest quality and health. Charlie Neibling is the project forester.

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Other Business:

Chair Keegan asked for an update about the Ken Marshall Memorial:

Mr. Josh Marshall mentioned that a few Commission Members went to the community garden and thought the most appropriate recognition would be a large rock placed at the garden entrance with words sandblasted into it reading ‘Ken Marshall Memorial Garden’.

The Community Garden Update:

Roger Sanborn has mowed and rototilled the fallow space at the Community Garden. Mr. Jeff Abbe has sown buckwheat. So, not only does the garden look great, but 50 of the 60 plots are being used.

Ms. Chandonnet stated the (IPM) Integrated Pest Management at the Community Garden with Ann LaCroix will be held on Monday, July 16th and it looks like there are about 8 people that will be attending.

Chair Keegan mentioned that everyone had copies of the Annual Reports for the Agriculture Commission from 2011 through 2017. Chair Keegan wanted not only to have all Commissioners know our history but to provide background for Senator Watters prior to their meeting with him. We want him to know that we have been at this for a while; are serious about what we are doing; and, that he will have a factual base on which to base proposals.

New Business:

Mr. Porter said Mark & Kim Collins from Boscawen are still trying to get their barn easement completed. He knows the issue is with the garage doors which makes that building look like a 2 car garage. Mr. Porter has asked around with barn contractors and has seen what other people have done to create a barn door affect. The building is old and there is a bump or rise on their uneven driveway so it’s not easy to open doors. Mr. Hardy said they are welcome to come in to talk to the selectmen about how we can help them. Discussion ensued.

Action Plan:

Mr. Hardy will find out where the process is with the Collins, then he will send an email to everyone with the information. Based on the information Commissioners can decide how to proceed.

Mr. Keegan brought up the subject of farmers moving equipment and getting stopped by police. It was discussed that most likely would not happen in Boscawen, but inviting the police department to a future meeting about the issues and MV RSA AG Vehicle Use. Discussion Ensued.

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Mr. Hardy asked Julie Fournier if she was interested in becoming a member of the Agriculture Commission and the process to become one. Agriculture Commission will make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen.

The next meeting of the AG Commission will be held on Thursday, August 9, 2018.

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Bevans and seconded by Mr. Marshall. All in favor, none opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Chandonnet