

**Town of Boscawen
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, June 9th, 2022, at 6:30 PM**

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

Absent- Tatyanna Wunschel-Alternate

Chair John Keegan opened the public meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call complete.

Review and Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes: Chair Keegan requested one change, line 42, strike through ‘...and to right and regulate’ and replace with ‘the authority and right to regulate...’.

Chair Keegan requested one change, line 51, change ‘collections’ to ‘collection sites.’

Chair Keegan requested one change, line 56, put a space between ‘600square’.

Chair Keegan requested one change, line 65, change ‘doesn’t’ to ‘don’t’.

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve the 05.12.22 draft minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Odell. All in favor. None opposed.

Financial Report: Mr. Tillman said the top of the Financial Report stated the period was from January 1st, 2022, through January 9th, 2022. Chair Keegan stated it should read through June 9th, 2022. Vice Chair Porter asked why the Administration line was negative. Chair Keegan said the Police background checks were \$25 a person. Mr. Tillman asked for clarification on the background reimbursement line. Chair Keegan said it was to reimburse Finance Director Kate Merrill, but he will confirm before they officially approve the Financial Report.

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve the Financial Report through 06.09.2022 with the conditional change noted. Seconded by Mr. Odell. All in favor. None opposed.

Old Business: Chair Keegan suggested removing the Boards and Commissions Report from the agenda. The Town started sending out a monthly newsletter with updates for the meetings.

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve removing the Boards and Commissions report from all future agendas. Seconded by Mr. Sanborn. All in favor. None opposed.

Vice Chair Porter gave an update on the Economic Development Committee because the timing of their last meeting postdated the newsletter. They previously discussed a job fair for business owners and residents of Boscawen. Originally, they planned for May or June but now it will be in November. They decided to conjoin with the Craft Fair at the school in hopes of a bigger turnout.

Composting Project: Mr. Ralph Odell met with Merrimack Valley School teacher Ms. Cindy Falabella. He toured the facilities and saw what they were doing in terms of composting and gardening. Each grade level has their own raised bed. The school also has a greenhouse, used by their Garden Club. The Garden Club meets every Wednesday. They grow plants to sell. All their proceeds go towards their seeds for the coming year. They do limited composting at the garden site which they want to expand. Before COVID,

they separated waste products for recycling in the cafeteria. Now all materials and waste are emptied in the same bin. They are hoping to start separating again, but no timeline. Ms. Falabella is willing to sell or give someone a few plants if they raise crops and bring the produce to a food pantry. Chair Keegan will mention it to Mr. Jeff Abbe at the Community Garden. Chair Keegan suggested mentioning the next composting session to Ms. Falabella. It is Tuesday, June 14th at 6:30 p.m. The last session attracted 15 people. There will be another Composting training, probably in July at the Community Garden on how to use pallets to build compost bins.

Landfill: Mr. Odell was at the Landfill on the 8th advertising the Composting Training. He passed out magnets and informed people on the composting session. One person had negative comments on people standing outside, holding signs. But Mr. Odell said the person was pleased that the Commission is doing something to reduce solid waste.

NH Food Conference: Chair Keegan went to a NH Food Conference on May 13th. It was supported by Cooperative Extension among others. The Food Alliance is looking at broad systemic issues. The focus of the conference was around building a resilient food system. In their breakout sessions, the themes discussed were defining a resilient system, how to build a system by protecting farmland and making it accessible to all farmers, investing in local food systems, encouraging climate friendly eating, reducing food waste and energy conserving and local education about agriculture.

Chicken Containment Issue: Chair Keegan reported a resident was notified by the Town's lawyer to pen his chickens or there will be further action. One or more residents have roosters in residential areas. Code Enforcement Officer Alan Hardy is taking care of the matter.

Old Home Day Judging: The committee is having trouble finding another judge for the sheep cutouts. Chair Keegan said Ms. Wunschel cannot be a judge due to relatives participating. Mr. Tillman suggested asking the representative, Ms. Alicea. Chair Keegan will contact her. Mr. Sanborn will contact Ms. Rodriguez on Corn Hill Road.

Other: Chair Keegan reported Community Gardeners and the public can now harvest fresh herbs. Anne Lacroix, and Louise Jacobs have replanted herbs that did not survive the winter. They keep it up all year round. It is being advertised on the Town's website to spread awareness among residents. The resource is available to everyone in town.

Master Plan Report: Vice Chair Porter made corrections to the Introduction for Agriculture. Commissioners discussed adding an introductory line that reads, 'Update of past and current Boscawen Agriculture projects'. Chair Keegan will continue working with Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler and staff on further updates. Chair Keegan reported the Town has changed data sources and does not have the budget to update most of the tables. Consequently, the focus will be on Table IV, Active Farms and Table VI, Current Use Information in the Research and Objectives Section. Mr. Tillman asked if the check marks on the edits meant the farms were on both the rack cards and table. Chair Keegan responded some information on the rack cards may not be complete but the Master Plan can now be updated and the rack cards with the next edition. Commissioners discussed farms and businesses that needed to be added or removed and assigned members to contact farmers and businesses whose status is unclear. Discussion ensued on edits. To date, there have been no updates to Table IV, Active Farms. Planning and Community Development Clerk Kara Gallagher worked on Table VI, Current Use Information. There is a total of 147 active forest properties in Boscawen. Of those, 24 are listed as actively managed. The requirements for actively managed properties are based on Current Use Criteria. Table VI excludes marginal or wetland. This accounts for the acreage differences between Tables IV and VI. Chair Keegan asked Commissioners how to proceed. Vice Chair Porter suggested

accepting the Town's records which enables including forestry in this section of the master plan. All concurred. Chair Keegan with staff assistance will finalize the Table VI edits to insure it is consistent with the rack cards and Table IV.

Action Items for Next Meeting: Chair Keegan will confirm the judges for the Old Home Day sheep contest with the help of Mr. Sanborn. Mr. Odell will continue to work with teachers at the Boscawen Elementary School to make them aware of educational opportunities about composting. Chair Keegan will finalize the edits to the list of Boscawen farms.

New Business: Mr. Odell discussed the funding for farms issue. Last week he saw an article on Cheshire County requesting a proposal related to this issue. While reading, he learned that Connecticut's agriculture was funded over \$500,000 of transition grants, divided among 33 farms. In Vermont, 65 farms were awarded the Farmer Resilience grant, \$2,500 each. He doesn't know how the funds were developed in CT, but in VT, private organizations and trust funds were used. The funds are available for general uses. The farms had to justify why they needed the funds. Chair Keegan noted Land for Good is participating with similar programs throughout NH. Chair Keegan asked Mr. Odell what he would suggest doing. Mr. Odell will continue to share relevant information as he learns it.

Mr. Odell also found an article discussing the 'right to repair' farm equipment. The companies use different approaches, and it is set up for smaller independent repair shops.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, July 14th, 2022 @ 6:30 PM

Adjournment:

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

Respectfully submitted, Hannah Gardner.