

**Town of Boscawen
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, April 11th, 2023, at 6:30 PM**

Members Present: John Keegan – Chair, John Porter-Vice Chair, Gary Tillman, Ralph Odell & Bill Bevens—Ex-Officio

Excused: Roger Sanborn & Julie Fournier-Alternate

Staff Present: Kara Gallagher—Planning & Community Development Assistant

Guests: Tama Tillman—Town Treasurer

Chair John Keegan opened the public meeting at 6:30 P.M.

Roll Call complete.

Chair Keegan noted Mr. Bill Bevens will be the Ex-Officio for the Agricultural Commission moving forward. PCD Assistant Kara Gallagher will update next month's meeting agenda to reflect the change.

Review and Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes:

- PCD Assistant Kara Gallagher requested one change, line 61, and change 'area 'to' areas'
- PCD Assistant Gallagher requested one change, line 116, capitalize 'Village District'.

Mr. Gary Tillman motioned to approve the 03.13.23 draft minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Ralph Odell. All in favor. None opposed.

Financial Report:

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve the Financial Report through 04.11.23 as presented. Seconded by Mr. Bevens. All in favor. None opposed.

Old Business:

- April Tasks: PCD Assistant Gallagher will track the April tasks.
- AgComm Account: Chair Keegan presented the revised proposed purpose statement for the new AgComm fund. The first paragraph reflected the original proposal presented to the Select Board. The second paragraph reflects the suggestions made by the Select Board. The only change would be replacing the word 'shed' with 'buildings' in the second line.

Mr. Tillman motioned to accept the purpose statement with the changes for the new AgComm account. Seconded by Vice Chair John Porter. All in favor. None opposed.

Chair Keegan stated the account will be opened this week with an initial deposit of \$885. He spoke with Mr. Jeff Abbe about the garden plots availability. Virtually, all the plots have been taken. There will be 12 new plots available once the irrigation is installed later this month. Mr. Abbe will have expenses for

pipng and plumbing. Chair Keegan suggested using the Commission's budget for the Community Garden to cover these expenses rather than plot fees until line #4193803 is expended. All concurred.

- Strengthening Local Processing Act (SLPA) Follow-Up: Chair Keegan found an article in the *Country Folks Newspaper* about a livestock group supporting a bill to expand options for meat packing capacity. He will follow up with Tyler Hyde to determine if this is a different bill than one this Commission is supporting. Chair Keegan will update Commissioners on the Bills by the June meeting.
- Draft Horse: PCD Assistant Gallagher will email Ms. Adele Sanborn for an update on the Draft Horse event to share with the Commissioners.
- Invasive Species: Chair Keegan met with the Conservation Commission following last month's meeting to discuss the invasive species initiative. Betsy McNaughten, a Conservation Commission member, will contact a representative from Fish and Game, Jill Kilborn, concerning a presentation to the Commissions and DPW. Chair Keegan noted the Conservation Commission Chair, Alan Hardy plans to invite Conservation Commissions from surrounding towns as well, at Ms. McNaughten's suggestion, to see if there is any interest. Mr. Odell said people were enthusiastic about the idea and open to further discussion. At the meeting, there was discussion about where to start and what the priorities should be. Chair Keegan will keep Commissioners updated with any changes or new ideas.
- Protecting our Food Supply Article: Chair Keegan presented an article from the *Concord Monitor* on 'Protecting our Food Supply'. The article provided different perspectives on how to think about food supply, what it implies for towns and how they might reorder some of their priorities. Chair Keegan noted it is something to consider when the Commission discusses how to promote NH Agriculture. Mr. Tillman noted the East Coast has been lucky to date despite being at the end of the supply chain. He suggested looking to smaller producers due to climate change. Mr. Odell noted these activities will effect communities large and small.
- Future Projects: Chair Keegan continued the discussion on future projects. PCD Assistant Gallagher asked Commissioners if they discussed having a booth at the Economic Development Fall Festival. Chair Keegan noted the decision was made to participate at the last meeting. In terms of recruiting, Chair Keegan asked Mr. Bevans if he reached out to the individual interested in Commission membership. Mr. Bevans reported the individual was busy this month but may attend next month's meeting. Vice Chair Porter suggested an agricultural 'Welcome Wagon' with information from the Department of Agriculture's 'Who's Who Directory'. The directory contains numerous agriculture contacts. Vice Chair Porter suggested including a 1-pager with additional information. Mr. Tillman noted they should include the Rack Card. Town Treasurer Tama Tillman suggested promoting gardening at one's home since the Community Garden has limited space to grow. Treasurer Tillman noted with food costs rising, people may want to learn how to save money by growing their own food. Chair Keegan noted AgComm used to hold a monthly educational program, heavily supported by Cooperative Extension. At this point, the Commission would have to ask the Master Gardener Program to furnish presenters. Mr. Bevans asked how many garden plots could be added with the space available. Chair Keegan said they have plenty of land to expand but are cautious with the rate at which expansion happens. Treasurer Tillman also suggested including seed packets in the 'Welcome Wagon'. Vice Chair Porter will put together the 'Welcome Wagon' proposal. Chair Keegan will check with Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt about what new town residents receive in the welcome bags. Mr. Tillman recommended hosting a composting class again this summer. Chair Keegan said Mr. Abbe has started a composting program at the Community Garden for gardeners. Mr. Tillman also suggested repeating distribution of composting information at the Transfer Station. Chair Keegan and Mr. Tillman will distribute information on Saturday between 10:30am-12:30pm. (Dates pending) PCD Assistant Gallagher and Mr. Tillman will review the composting materials available.

New Business: Mr. Odell shared more information on the composting article he previously mentioned. The article mentioned the bill would require an entity that is producing more than a ton of food waste per week, to keep the waste out of the landfill. The remainder of the article discusses the shortcomings of the data that is available to help support it. Mr. Odell was able to track the bill until Wednesday of last week, when it was presented in a hearing. There was no opposition to the bill. The Committee approved the bill unanimously, but the final legislative vote is undetermined. The State Legislature had a deadline to act on a series of bills so they could 'cross over' to the Senate. Mr. Odell noted the article discussed alternatives that other states have done to minimize food waste at major facilities. One alternative is using biowaste facilities to make biogas. Chair Keegan asked who sponsored the bill. Vice Chair Porter noted David Waters was a co-sponsor. Mr. Odell will track down the sponsor for HB-300/HB-462.

Other Business: Town Treasurer Tillman explained payment and check information for the new AgComm account. For a check request, the Chair or Vice Chair of the Commission should complete a check request form with an additional Commissioners signature. Treasurer Tillman recommended requiring two signatures for check requests and noted they don't have to be officers. For services that don't have an initial receipt, an explanation needs to be attached to the request form. For example, mileage requests don't have a receipt but require explanation showing the miles driven. Treasurer Tillman noted for the actual checks, one of the officers must sign. The checks are done around midafternoon on Wednesdays. Ms. Tillman noted they don't need to designate members to sign the check request forms because any AgComm member is authorized to sign. PCD Assistant Gallagher said if one of the officers is not available to sign a check request, then they will reach out to an Ag Commissioner for signature. Chair Keegan asked how he will be informed that he needs to sign something. Ms. Tillman noted a staff member will reach out to him if signatures are needed.

PCD Assistant Gallagher noted Farm Bureau membership cards are available. Members should reach out to her directly to obtain their cards and information on the benefits.

Planning and Community Development Update: PCD Assistant Gallagher said the Planning Board worked on updating the Master Plan Housing Chapter. In the upcoming month, there is a 2-lot subdivision on Woodbury Lane. PCD Assistant Gallagher noted there will be an application for a Conditional Use Permit & Minor Site Plan Review for Planned Unit Development on Norac Drive. The original site plan did include a barber school, but it will be amended to include two duplexes that have a smaller footprint. There will be a total of 4 housing units on that site.

Pending Tasks:

- Chair Keegan will edit the purpose statement for the new AgComm fund with the approved changes. He will also follow-up on SLPA and check with Town Clerk Hoyt about what new residents in town receive in the welcome bags.
- Vice Chair Porter will put together the 'Welcome Wagon' proposal.
- Mr. Odell will track down the sponsor for HB-300/HB-462.
- Mr. Tillman and PCD Assistant Gallagher will go through composting educational materials.
- PCD Assistant Gallagher will email Ms. Adele Sanborn for an update on the Draft Horse event and share with Commissioners.

Next Meeting and Public Hearing:

- **Tuesday, May 9th, 2023 @ 6:30 p.m.**

Mr. Tillman motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Bevans. All in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted, Hannah Gardner