

**Town of Boscawen
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, August 8th, 2023, at 6:30 PM**

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

Others Present: Kara Gallagher – Recording Secretary

Guests: Cindy Butler & Tim Reese – NH-Hereford Hogs

Chair Keegan opened the public meeting at 6:30 p.m. and completed roll call.

Minutes:

Chair Keegan requested several changes:

- Line 74-Change “is” to “are”.
- Line 95-Strike “to”.
- Line 113-Change “mentioned” to “mentions”.
- Line 115-Change “they” to “he”.
- Line 142-Strike “on”.
- Line 145-Change “looking into” to “discussing” and strike “district”.
- Line 150-Strike “to consider”.
- Line 152-Change “amount” to “number” and “want to develop” to “support development”.
- Line 154-Change “firming” to “filling” and change “less” to “fewer”.
- Line 155-Strike “they’ll see” and change “wanting” to “will want”.
- Line 163-Change “drive” to “attract” and change “into” to “to”.
- Line 164 & Line 165-Sentence to read “He asked if they were finished”.
- Line 166-Change “their” to “the”.
- Line 175-Strike “up” and change “Water Street” to “North Water Street”.
- Line 184-Sentence to read “...they still need to hold a Public Hearing...”
- Line 186-Strike “as well”.
- Line 188-Strike “in the process”.
- Line 193-Strike “on” and change “were” to “are”.

Mr. Tillman requested one change to line 98-Change “harvest” to “produce”.

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve the 07.11.23 draft minutes as amended. Seconded by Vice Chair Porter. All in favor. None opposed.

Financial Report:

Chair Keegan suggested to the Commissioners retain the previous month's Financial Report for month to month comparisons. If there are any questions, direct them to Finance Director Kate Merrill prior to the meeting to give her time to provide answers.

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve the Financial Report through 08.08.23 as presented. Seconded by Mr. Sanborn. All in favor. None opposed.

Old Business:

Community Garden Update: Chair Keegan reported that the recent educational event at the garden was a success. There wasn't a huge turnout but the gardeners that attended were very engaged. Ms. Louise Jacob and Ms. Anne Lacroix did a great job with their presentation. Chair Keegan said they also provided an informational handout and if any of the Commissioners would like one to give their name to PCD Assistant Gallagher. Only 3 garden plots have been abandoned this season, and one was taken over by a latecomer. No predators have been reported so far. Ms. Fournier asked if rain had been an issue. Chair Keegan said nothing specific has been reported.

Old Home Day Draft Horse Preparations: Mr. Sanborn said everyone that planned on attending has signed up. The plan will be to start at 10:00 a.m. The land to be used will be on the right-hand side in front of the Twiggs Studio, and a little beyond.

Flashy Flock Judging: Chair Keegan said the judging will begin at 2:00 p.m. The judges will be Sue Porter, Ralph Odell, and Marilyn Martin. Vice Chair Porter asked if there was a meeting place. Mr. Sanborn suggested the judges meet at Twiggs. Chair Keegan is still waiting to hear from Town Administrator Katie Phelps about the transportation.

Welcome Sign Status: Vice Chair Porter said the sign repair is just about done. After seeing the condition, he used a special oil-based primer. Some of the knots had bled through, so he used a sealer to take care of the bleeding. All that's left now will be to place the final coat of white paint, which will be the third coat. Once the painting is complete, the medallion will be reattached by Ms. Katie Shaw from Growing Minds Wood Co. Chair Keegan said he and Mr. Jeff Abbe will place the new sign on North Water Street.

New Business:

New Hampshire Hereford Hogs: Chair Keegan had visited Mr. Tim Reese and Ms. Cindy Butler, owners of NH Hereford Hogs, located at 27 Corn Hill Road, and invited them to attend tonight's meeting. Mr. Reese and Ms. Butler prepared a brief PowerPoint to help explain their operation. Mr. Reese said the Hereford breed has become endangered, with only 2,000 breeding pairs left in the United States. They had 60 piglets born this year and lost 1 sow during the birthing process. Their mission is to provide the New England area with quality Hereford pigs for both showing at fairs and for market. The Hereford breed is so named for its close appearance to Hereford cattle. Not all offspring meet all the breeding standards. Mr. Reese brought along a piglet named *Sweetie* to illustrate the standards considered necessary to qualify as a Hereford Hog. *Sweetie* has a red body, white face, ears that break forward, and four white feet. There are three marketing categories Mr. Reese's pigs fall into: donated, breeder, and feeder. Pigs can sell for up to \$40,000. Annually, he donates up to 4 or 5 pigs to Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H. Mr. Reese asked the Commissioners to help get the word out about his donations. If there were any kids looking for a pig to send them his way. Hereford meat is redder than typical pork and very lean. Mr. Reese discussed the

good, stressful, and bad times that come with breeding pigs. He and Cindy are present and vigilant throughout the pregnancy and birth. Any piglet rejected by its mother, such as *Sweetie* they care for. This can include feeding them every 1.5 hours around the clock. The gestation period is 3 months 3 weeks and 3 days! When it comes to breeding, Artificial Insemination offers more options, but the timing must be right, and it doesn't always take. Mr. Reese has a chart to keep track the sows' cycles, breeding date, the sire's name, due date and a range of other vital information.

He noted that boars limit options/bloodlines hence he buys semen from reputable breeders around the country and supplies semen from his boars to other breeders. Both methods have pros and cons. Mr. Reese only breeds his pigs once a year, whereas most breeders breed twice a year. When preparing for babies, Mr. Reese sets up farrowing stalls with heat lamps. He must be prepared with on-hand supplies and equipment. He highly recommends retaining a good vet. Mr. Reese uses Blackwater Veterinary Services. He has been in the business for many years and has extensive experience and knowledge but as he said, "I don't know it all". Mr. Tillman asked what interested Mr. Reese in breeding and raising Hereford pigs. He was in 4-H for many years and had raised multiple types of animals. He then started raising various breeds of pigs, before discovering the Hereford breed. Chair Keegan asked what his plans were for the future. Mr. Reese would like to expand his operations. He is hoping to become eligible for federal grants. Ms. Fournier asked about the history of the breed. Mr. Reese said the breed was created here in the United States. Farmers in the western wanted pigs that looked like their cattle. Chair Keegan asked where the pigs are slaughtered. Mr. Reese used to use a facility in East Conway, but it burnt down. He now sends his pigs to a couple local USDA facilities. Mr. Reese encouraged the Commissioners to stop by any time to see the operation.

Fresh Start Farms Tour: Chair Keegan and Mr. Odell spoke with Ms. Emma Richmond-Boudewyns to arrange a tour of Fresh Start Farms. Chair Keegan asked the Commissioners if they'd like to attend as a group or individually. All concurred on a group tour. This would be noticed as the September meeting. The Commissioners discussed dates and times. Chair Keegan will touch base with Ms. Richmond-Boudewyns and will report back.

Capital Improvement Plan: Chair Keegan has gone to the CIP meetings in the past but doesn't feel he needs to attend this year. He asked the Commissioners if there were any future projects to consider adding to the CIP. Discussion ensued. All agreed not to add any new projects to this year's CIP.

Other Business:

Committee Monthly Newsletter: Typically, a PCD staff member provides an update of the PCD Department during the meeting. Going forward, PCD Assistant Gallagher will include the Committee Monthly Newsletter in the meeting materials.

Recording Secretary: Chair Keegan provided an update to the Recording Secretary position. PCD Assistant Gallagher will now be the Recording Secretary. There will no longer be a PCD staff member attending the meetings. Any questions that are normally directed towards staff during meetings will be included in the Action Item list and distributed once the draft minutes are posted.

Vice Chair Porter reported that Adam Crete at Highway View Farm will be installing milking robots in October. Once completed, theirs will be the 6th robotic milking farm in New Hampshire. Currently the barn is under construction to add an extension. They will also be adding robotic manure vacuum cleaners.

Action Items:

- Chair Keegan and Mr. Abbe will place the new “Welcome to Boscawen” sign on North Water Street once completed.
- Chair Keegan will follow up with Town Administrator Katie Phelps about the Flashy Flock judging transportation.
- Chair Keegan will schedule the tour of Fresh Start Farms with Ms. Richmond-Boudewyns.

Next Meeting: TBD

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

Respectfully submitted by Kara Gallagher.