

**Town of Boscawen
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at 6:30 PM**

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

Excused: Julie Fournier – Alternate

Staff Present: Kara Gallagher – Planning and Community Development Coordinator/Recording Secretary & Ruth Ashby – Planning and Community Development Assistant

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

Minutes:

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve the 12/12/23 draft minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Odell. All in favor. None opposed.

Financial Report:

Ex-Officio Bevans noted that the 4193803 Community Garden line item was missing under “Expenses” in the Jan-Dec 2023 Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual Financial Report. Chair Keegan will ask Finance Director Kate Merrill for clarification.

Mr. Tillman motioned to defer action on the Financial Report to the February meeting. Seconded by Mr. Odell. All in favor. None opposed.

Old Business:

Speaker: Chair Keegan was unable to engage a speaker for the January meeting. He did speak to Stacia Langille, the owner of Ancora Imparo Equine Center on Corn Hill Road. She is currently finishing her master’s degree and will be done in May. She expressed interest in attending the May meeting and becoming more involved in the town affairs. Chair Keegan mentioned sugaring season was coming up and suggested inviting individuals who sugar to a future meeting.

Old Home Day 2024: Chair Keegan asked if the Commissioners would like to continue participation in the Old Home Day Yard Sale. All concurred. Chair Keegan asked if the Commissioners would like to continue their participation in the Old Home Day art program in conjunction with Twiggs by providing contest judges.

Mr. Tillman motioned to supply judges for the 2024 Old Home Day contest. Seconded by Mr. Odell. All in favor. None opposed.

UNH Carsey School Webinar: Vice Chair Porter and Mr. Odell attended the webinar. They were impressed by the amount of virtual participation, 80+. The discussion was similar to past webinars. There were

representatives from the Department of Agriculture, NH Farm Bureau, and Land Trusts with discussions of their successes during 2023 and goals for 2024.

Budget 2024: The proposed 2024 budget is \$600. This will go through the Advisory Budget Committee and then Town Meeting for final approval. Ex-Officio Bevans explained the budget was cut because no more than \$600 had been spent by the Commission in the last 3 years. This does not include the income from the Community Garden.

New Member Recruitment: Chair Keegan spoke with Mr. Steve Geddes, the resident who won an award for growing a 757-pound pumpkin that was sculpted at the “Big E” this year. He is focusing on gardening and other pursuits at this point. Chair Keegan asked if the Commissioners could visit his gardens this summer. Mr. Geddes is interested in hosting a site visit. Chair Keegan asked the Commissioners to think of other residents who may be interested in joining the Commission.

Commission Calendar: Chair Keegan reviewed the 2023 calendar and suggested the following edits/additions for the 2024 calendar:

- May – Old Home Day Yard Sale 5/18/24
- August – Old Home Day (judges) 8/24/24 & remove Draft Horse Event
- October – Fall Festival w/EDC 10/5/24

Vice Chair Porter mentioned the Twilight Garden Talks at the Community Garden in June and July and asked if they should be included in this year’s calendar. Chair Keegan said he would discuss this with Mr. Jeff Abbe and report back. PCD Coordinator Gallagher said these took place on June 21 and July 12, both Wednesdays.

BCG Herb Garden: Chair Keegan spoke with Ms. Anne Lacroix who manages the Herb Garden. She informed him that the timbers were rotting and would need to be replaced. She will provide a budget. The Herb Garden has been a huge success.

Market Bulletin: In the January 3rd edition of the Market Bulletin, the Commissioner spoke about adding additional staff to the Department, which will give them the ability to have a greater presence in communities around the State. One area they are hoping to bring more focus to is invasive species.

Feeling the Effects on the Farm Article: Chair Keegan provided a copy of an article written by Greg Berger, owner of Spring Ledge Farm in New London. The article focuses on climate change, how it’s affected him and his business, and how he’s coping. Chair Keegan suggested the Commission invite Mr. Berger to a meeting to further discuss these topics.

New Business:

Update Rules of Procedure: All the Boards/Commissions/Committees have been asked to add the Utilization of Town Counsel Policy to their Rules of Procedure. The Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment will both hold Public Hearings to change their Rules of Procedure, although it is not required for the Agricultural Commission. Chair Keegan suggested adding a sentence saying the Commissioners can act upon changes in a meeting by a majority vote.

Mr. Tillman motioned to act upon changes to the Rules of Procedure in a Commission meeting every 3 years. Seconded by Mr. Odell. All in favor. None opposed.

The Commission reviewed the document and suggested the following edits/additions:

- Title: The By-Laws and Rules of Procedure were combined into one document.
- Article B #3: Change “secretary” to “town staff”.
- Article C #1: Strike “and shall elect a secretary and treasurer”.
- Article C #1 A: Strike “secretary and”.
- Article F #8: Change “disqualification” to “recusal” wherever it’s written. And strike “shall be advisory and non-binding and” from the last sentence.
- Article F #11: Add “Utilization of Town Counsel Policy”.
- Article J #1: Replace “secretary” with “town staff”.
- Add that the Commission can act upon changes to the Rules of Procedure in a scheduled Agricultural Commission meeting.

Mr. Tillman motioned to accept the Rules of Procedure as modified. Seconded by Vice Chair Porter. All in favor. None opposed.

Involving Young People in Agriculture: Mr. Odell did not have the chance to reach out to any individuals since the last meeting but will do so prior to the next meeting. No further discussion. Chair Keegan asked the Commissioners to think of individuals who may be interested in speaking to the Commission.

Farm Bureau Membership: Chair Keegan said the NHFB membership was due. There was a mistake in the invoice sent with the amount due being listed as \$250 instead of \$75. PCD Coordinator Gallagher will contact NHFB to get a corrected invoice.

Mr. Tillman motioned to renew the NH Farm Bureau membership for \$75. Seconded by Ex-Officio Bevans. All in favor. None opposed.

Other Business:

Mr. Odell would like to try and get the word out about the different agricultural activities that the Commission supports. He felt Facebook was the easiest avenue to spread the word. Chair Keegan mentioned the Beautification Committee is trying to do something similar and thought it was worth a try. Discussion ensued.

Vice Chair Porter asked to keep the AgComm logo development on the agenda. Chair Keegan will talk to Mrs. Adele Sanborn about finding an artist and OHD.

Pending Tasks:

- Chair Keegan will discuss the Financial Report with FD Merrill.
- Commissioners will suggest new members to recruit.
- PCD Coordinator Gallagher will send out the updated calendar.
- PCD Coordinator Gallagher will update the Rules of Procedure.
- Ex-Officio Bevans & Chair Keegan will talk to the individuals in town that have sugaring operations about speaking to the Commission.

- Chair Keegan will talk to Mrs. Sanborn about the logo and OHD.
- PCD Coordinator Gallagher will send out the NHFB membership dues.

Next Meeting: February 13th, 2024 @ 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Tillman motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Vice Chair Porter. All in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Kara Gallagher.