

**Town of Boscawen
Agricultural Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2015**

Commissioners Present: John Keegan, Elaine Clow, Tina Larochelle, William Bevans

Alternate Commissioners Present:

Commissioners Absent: Angela Swyers

Commissioners Ex-Officio Absent: Roger Sanborn

Alternate Commissioners Absent: Ken Marshall, John Porter, Tom Danko

Others present: Alan Hardy, Planning & Community Development Director, Kellee Jo Easler, Planning & Community Development Assistant Director, Bruce Crawford, Chair, Planning Board, Alexandria Hudek, home owner.

John Keegan, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. J. Keegan directed members to the Commission to the meeting packet containing the AG Commission meeting minutes of **12/11/2014**, the Account Report, and two documents related to the status of the commercial kitchen feasibility study which will be discussed under Old Business. The Proposed definitions for the 2015 town meeting from the Agricultural Commission (Revised December 18, 2014) are also beside your meeting packet.

The Commission approved unanimously the motion to accept the **12/11/2014** Commission's meeting minutes as presented, made by member T. Larochelle and seconded by W. Bevans.

The Commission approve unanimously the motion to accept the **12/31/2014** accountant report made by member T. Larochelle and seconded by member W. Bevans.

Land Use Happenings:

Defining Livestock and Pets: J. Keegan reminded the members that he had circulated these definitions to them prior to the meeting and did a telephone poll. The result of the poll was all in favor. The chair asked for a motion to make the vote official. The Commission approved the motion to make the poll official made by W. Bevans and seconded by T. Larochelle.

Other: Alexandria Hudek, who resides at 208 High Street, explained that she has just purchased this property and would like to keep a horse and probably a second companion animal on the 3.5 acre plot. She had spoken with Kellee who explained she would need a special exemption from the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA). Kellee also suggested that she attend this meeting to outline her plans to the Commission, as the normal procedure is for Commission members to make a site visit to the property in question and then provide the ZBA with a recommendation and, possibly, conditions that the ZBA usually accepts. During the course of the conversation Alan and several Commissioners recalled that the Cassidy property at 214 High Street, a lot with many characteristics similar to Ms. Hubek's, had been thru a similar process in 2011. At that point the Chair asked T. Larochelle to lead a site review team and complete their report prior to January 13th, to meet the ZBA submittal deadline for their January 23rd meeting. W. Bevans volunteered to be part of the team. (T. Danko subsequently volunteered to participate as well.) The review was scheduled for Saturday morning January 10, 2015 @ 11.

Bruce Crawford observed that over the past couple of years many of the special exceptions requested of the ZBA involve horses in the R-2 zone. Perhaps it is time to revisit this item in the zoning ordinance.

Tom Giovagnoli plans; discussion of status: Mr. Giovagnoli, is interested in purchasing a 200 acre parcel, zoned agricultural, on the right side of Route 4 on the Boscawen/Salisbury line for a chicken egg operation,

personal residence and beef operation, if there are no impediments to him developing the farm. His plans are familiar to several members as he met with A. Hardy, B. Crawford and J. Keegan following unsuccessful attempts to develop farms in Dunbarton and Weare. Mr. Giovagnoli will be presenting a conceptual overview of his plans to the Planning Board on January 13th. He has contacted all his abutters to explain his plans and all have responded positively. A. Hardy and B. Crawford provided the Commissioners with a thumbnail of the parcel's topography, soils, and access as well as responding to questions concerning the scale of the proposed operation, housing and traffic. Following this discussion J. Keegan asked for a motion to support Mr. Giovagnoli's plan. W. Bevans made a motion that the Agricultural Commission supports Mr. Giovagnoli's plan to establish an egg production and beef operation on the 200 acre plot on the Boscawen/Salisbury line. T. Larochelle seconded the motion which passed.

Action Plan: J. Keegan will attend the Planning Board meeting on January 13th to inform the Planning Board of the Commission's motion and to speak in support of Mr. Giovagnoli's plan.

Old Business: J. Keegan directed the Commission to the first item under Old Business.

Review the Action Plans from the December 11, 2014 AG Commission meeting: J. Keegan reported that the action plans for both the Wild and Scenic Rivers and the Planning Board submissions were completed.

Report of Hackleboro Visit: B. Crawford and J. Keegan visited Harry Weiser on January 2nd to discuss how the Planning Board and the Agricultural Commission might work more effectively with him to support his business in Boscawen. They updated Mr. Weiser on changes in the membership and philosophy of the Planning Board, providing him with examples of how the Board is more supportive of local business and of collaboration with the Agricultural Commission to improve the zoning ordinance, making it more agriculturally friendly. J. Keegan informed him of the change in ownership of the Kettle & Crane as well as their plans to attract 'events' to the venue. In response to a comment by Mr. Weiser that he has considered investing in a commercial kitchen at his current location, J. Keegan explained that the AgComm is supporting a feasibility study to determine if a commercial kitchen is viable in Boscawen. That led to a discussion of how this section of King Street, given the presence of Cumberland Farms, Kapelli's, Black Forest Nursery, the Hackleboro farm stand and now the reopening of the Kettle & Crane might attract more customers from the 14,000 cars that pass each day. Mr. Weiser explained that he has considered moving the building currently on the property closer to the road or building a farm stand, modeled on the Walker Farm Stand in Bristol, that could provide the location for a multi-farm outlet. At this point, financing is an issue as is his reluctance to invest in a location where he has had serious problems with vandalism. In conclusion, Messrs. Crawford and Keegan reported Mr. Weiser seemed positive about the outreach as well as the information about the town boards.

Town Report: T. Danko provided a written summary stating the most important AgComm activities are the community garden plots and the educational series. The members brainstormed and identified the following items that should also be included in the report:

- Community kitchen feasibility study
- Master plan implementation
- Signage at the entrances to town
- Input on the Wild and Scenic River designation
- Monitoring the legislature for agricultural related bills
- Recommendations to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment
- Site Visits
- Input to the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)
- Work with county and state officials

Action Plan: J. Keegan and E. Clow will write and submit the report by the deadline.

Community Kitchen Update: J. Keegan reviewed the two reports in the meeting folder. One is a progress report and the second is the highlights of a follow-up meeting to discuss results and future plans. J. Keegan noted the principal outcome is a meeting with the 10 farmers who have expressed an interest in using the kitchen. A meeting is being scheduled by the consultants.

Educational Program: E. Clow made reference to the complete list of programs in the December minutes, noting there have not been any changes in the schedule or content. Concerning the chicken program on the 17th, responses to date has been OK. E. Clow pointed out the educational program offerings continue to receive wide publicity from the *Concord Monitor*, NH Farm Bureau, and the *Weekly Market Bulletin* among others.

Community Garden: J. Keegan reminded Commissioners that the Garden Committee will be meeting January 22nd @6:30pm in the fourth floor meeting room. The agenda will focus on the new herb garden as well as signage. E. Clow noted that the perennial garden along Corn Hill Road is in its third year and should be in full bloom this spring and summer.

New Business: J. Keegan directed the Commission to the New Business portion of the meeting.

Identify 2015 Objectives: J. Keegan deferred this discussion to the February meeting.

Action Plan: Members are to review the objectives in the Agricultural Chapter of the Master Plan and come prepared to discuss at the February meeting.

Other: J. Keegan reported that Tim Fortier, the editor-in-chief of the New Hampshire Municipal Association's *Town and City Magazine* would like to do a story about the AgComm for their March-April edition. He will be at town office from 2 to 4pm on Wednesday, January 14th. J. Keegan asked that as many Commissioners and Alternates as possible attend. To date J. Porter, E. Clow, B. Crawford, A. Hardy and R. Sanborn have agreed to be there.

Action Plan: That as many members and staff participate in the interview with Tim Fortier on the 14th as possible.

T. Larochelle made a motion to adjourn the Agricultural Commission meeting of 01/08/2015. The motion was seconded by W. Bevans and unanimously approved at 8:35pm.

Next Meeting:

February 12, 2015 @7pm

Respectfully submitted,

John Keegan
01/16/15