

Town of Boscawen
Agricultural Commission
Meeting Minutes – Final
Boscawen Municipal Complex – 4th Floor Meeting Room
February 16, 2017 at 7pm

Members Present: John Keegan – Chair, Elaine Clow – Vice-Chair, Tina Larochelle, Bill Bevans, Josh Marshall, John Porter.

Members Absent: Angela Swyers

Member Ex-Officio Absent: Roger Sanborn

Others Present: Alan Hardy – Planning and Community Development Director, Katie Phelps – Recording Secretary, and Bruce Crawford, Planning Board Chair.

Chairman Keegan called the meeting to order at 7:02pm with a voting board.

Roll Call by Chairman Keegan.

Review and Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes from the January 12, 2017 meeting with two changes made by Tina Larochelle, and seconded by Bill Bevans. All in favor.

Accountant's Report:

Motion to accept the Accountant's Report made by Tina Larochelle, and seconded by Joshua Marshall. All in favor.

Land Use Updates:

Tabled until next meeting.

Old Business:

- **Educational Program:**

Vice-Chair Elaine Clow said they just had a round table at the extension office regarding future talks that she felt was successful.

Jeff Abbe placed a seed order recently and everyone was able to get 10% off their order.

Upcoming talks include:

- March 6th – “Chickens” with Dot Perkins
- April 3rd – “Raising pigs in the back yard” with Dot Perkins
- May 1st – “Integrated Pest Management” with Ann Lacroix
- June 9th or 10th – “How animals are affected by poisonous plants and pastures.” with Dot Perkins
 - To be held at the Community Garden
- June (Alternative) – Herbs Date/TBA (Speaker to be announced)
- July 10th – “Varmint Control” (excluding predators) TBA
- August 7th – Eco System of Pollinators – Amy Papineau
- September – Electric Fencing TBA
- October 2nd – “Speaking for Wild Life – How to support the comeback of bats”
- November – Backyard bird feeding – Audubon TBA

Town of Boscawen
Agricultural Commission
Meeting Minutes – Final
Boscawen Municipal Complex – 4th Floor Meeting Room
February 16, 2017 at 7pm

- December 4th – “So you want to keep bees at home?” Bee orders go in this month. TBA
- Other possibilities:
 - Mushrooms
 - John Porter’s barn talk
 - Container and raised space gardening
 - Tree walk
- Feb 2018 – Potential talk about maple sugar

Chairman Keegan said he, Jeff Abbe and Elaine met with the Cooperative Extension about their decreased staffing and spoke about the opportunities for a wider use of the Community Garden. They suggested that the Cooperative Extension look at the garden as a resource for some of their educational programs. They seemed interested.

Joshua Marshall suggested visiting his farm to view his electric fences if the Commission wanted to do a tour with the September talk.

- **Community Garden:**

A meeting was held on Tuesday, February 14th at Jeff Abbe’s house. They have a new member of the committee – Jean Doherty. Angela Fellers is back. Judith Abbe, who has just finished her Master Gardener course, is currently getting involved with the garden program at Boscawen Elementary School.

Opening day for the Community Garden will be Saturday, April 29, 2017. The closing date will be October 9, 2017 which is a couple weeks later than last year. Gardeners can return to the same plots this year if they want. Elaine says they are hoping to have applications available at Town Meeting on March 14, 2017.

The new Community Garden sign that should be arriving shortly. Finishing touches are currently being made. Two tree protectors have been purchased to use for signage at the garden.

John Porter said it wasn’t feasible to get a storage shed at the State Prison because of selection and price. John Keegan and Jeff Abbe used their connections at Merrimack Valley High School to see if the students could build the shed as a shop project. The teacher, Michael Valinski, seemed interested. AGCOMM will purchase the materials and MVHS students will build the shed at no cost. John Keegan has put a letter together to ask National Lumber to either donate materials or offer them at a discounted price.

Elaine said the next meeting of the Garden Committee will be March 13, 2017. Chairman Keegan asked that when the minutes from Garden Committee’s February 14th meeting are finalized that they be forwarded to Katie Phelps who will distribute them to the Agricultural Commission members.

Elaine mentioned that she is looking for volunteers to assist in the layout of the garden. (Stakes, etc.) Chairman Keegan said he may be able to help with that.

- **Legislative Update – Senate Bill 169:**

Bruce Crawford said the Agritourism bill will be retained by the Senate. He would be surprised if anyone did anything with it. Josh Marshall said the Farm Bureau wasn’t concerned with it and didn’t think there

Town of Boscawen
Agricultural Commission
Meeting Minutes – Final
Boscawen Municipal Complex – 4th Floor Meeting Room
February 16, 2017 at 7pm

would be enough support. Mr. Crawford said once things get sent to study in the Senate they don't typically follow through.

- **2016 Project:**

John Porter said AGCOMM is looking for ways to highlight local farmers. It would make people aware of how much agriculture there is in town. It could be a directory format.

The Board reviewed the Research & Objectives section of the Master Plan. A lot of information is out of date. There are some listed that are no longer active as well as new additions. Josh Marshall mentioned that 9 of the farms in the directory produce hay. Hay isn't going to attract a lot of people. Some won't want to be highlighted in a directory. There is a lot of interest in "buying local" in the community. Discussion ensued.

Josh Marshall offered to work on the layout and design for the project. John Porter said the mission wouldn't be getting people to visit but rather to grow awareness for the agriculture in town. He suggested a heavy piece of paper, folded in half, and free standing. Josh asked what type of information to include for each farm. Bill Bevans suggested asking people if they want to be included on the directory. John Porter suggested that the name, address, and commodity be listed. If someone wanted to have visits from the public they could include a phone number or email address.

Chairman Keegan recommended that the Commission divide up the list and try to verify and update information. Alan Hardy said the town has information for who owns what based on the map and lot. He and his staff could pull the property cards for those specific properties. The property cards will not include telephone numbers so that will need to be researched. Alan recommended emailing Katie Phelps with updated information before the March meeting and she will update the file information. We will revisit this initiative at the next meeting.

- **Town Meeting**

Elaine Clow would like to have garden applications available for Town Meeting. Alan asked if there was anything changed on the application that would need to be reviewed by legal or insurance. Elaine says a few things have been eliminated. She will forward him the application draft within the next few days.

Motion to adjourn made by Elaine Clow, and seconded by Tina Larochelle. The meeting adjourned at 8pm.

Next meeting of the Commission will be March 10, 2017 at 7pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Katie Phelps