

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

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

Alternate Members Present: John Porter

Members Absent: Angela Swyers

Member Ex-Officio Absent: Roger Sanborn

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

Chairman Keegan called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with a voting board.

Roll Call made by Chairman Keegan.

Review and Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Commission reviewed meeting minutes from the February meeting. Elaine and Josh suggested changes.

Motion made by Tina Larochelle, and seconded by Josh Marshall, to accept the minutes from the February meeting with changes. All in favor.

Accountant's Reports:

The Commission reviewed the Treasurer's Report as well as transaction detailed account information for the Community Garden. YTD \$189.30 has been spent out of the \$1800 Community Garden budget.

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

Chairman Keegan passed around newspaper articles for the Commissioners to review. The first article was in the Union Leader about Tom Giovagnoli's eggs. The second article was in the Concord Monitor about Heather Wunschel's therapeutic riding program looking for a new home.

Land Use Updates:

- **Updates from Alan Hardy:**

Alan updated the Commission on a meeting for the Emergency Management Plan meeting held on March 7th which included "Mass Care, Housing and Human Services" as well as "Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources". Most of it centered on worst case scenarios. The Merrimack County facility is being made available for sheltering. The question of what to do with animal carcasses in a large scale episode was discussed. Two local Veterinarians one at Riverside Veterinary Clinic and another at Blackwater Veterinary Services would sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide support to animals in the event of an emergency situation.

Alan mentioned that currently a local shelter facility, other than the County facility, is not in the plan. In the past, residents went to Bow for a shelter. The town hall and school were options, but they don't have a generator. The only place in town equipped with a generator and a kitchen suitable for feeding a large

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number of people is Avaloch Farm Music Institute. Josh Marshall said he thinks it would be wise to have a place in town for a shelter because transporting to Bow is problematic. However, people with needs such as oxygen may need a local resource to assist them.

Old Business:

• **Community Garden:**

Chairman Keegan passed around a materials price sheet from National Lumber for the garden shed project totaling \$2,378.66. Email correspondence with Mike Valinski at Merrimack Valley was also reviewed by the Commission. The email outlines the construction timeline and materials necessary for the shed, as well as pictures of what it will look like. Mr. Valinski and his sons will assemble the shed on site once it is completed. John and Jeff haven't heard back from the corporate office at National Lumber regarding the letter they sent asking for donated materials. John and Jeff will continue to seek a discount. The manager at National Lumber offered to give a 5% school discount. National Lumber does have a door and windows that they could mark down the price if the commission wanted to purchase them. Discussion on quote specifics ensued. Bill Bevans asked why there were 130 8ft 2x4s because that is too many. Jeff said they will be used for the rafters and stud walls. Chairman Keegan said we can ask Mike Valinski. Colby Lumber and Big Jims are also options for materials. Jeff Abbe stopped at Coldbrook Gravel and he thinks we should be able to get one load of gravel/ledge pack for free for the foundation. Jeff mentioned we need to get the materials to the school because they only have so much time before the end of the school year.

Alan said he has a budget for signage outside of Agricultural Commission to purchase sign-related materials. The Commission would like one to say, "Plots Available Now". Alan can have them made.

The garden application was sent to the Town's insurance company for review. The attorney at Primex returned it with new additions including an extensive 'Indemnification and Hold Harmless' waiver, as well as a separate consent and release of photos/video/audio. Chairman Keegan worries this will intimidate and deter gardeners from participating. Alan said to be under the Town's insurance umbrella we have to comply by their conditions to operate. Discussion ensued. Chairman Keegan requested that the Garden Committee meet to finalize documents and plans within the week so that applications could be made available at Town Meeting.

Motion for the Agricultural Commission to give authority to the Garden Committee to meet, make decisions, and finalize garden documents so that they are available for Town Meeting made by Josh Marshall, and seconded by Tina Larochelle. All in favor.

Katie Phelps will assist in signing up gardeners and collecting garden plot fees. Jeff Abbe is interested in determining the location for the proposed shed. Chairman Keegan said that's a decision the Garden Committee can make and it doesn't need to be cleared by the Agricultural Commission.

Vice-Chair Elaine Clow mentioned that there was a request made by an organic bee keeper looking for a plot in Boscawen to place bee hives. The Community Garden was suggested but Elaine has reservations

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due to allergies. She thinks it would be a liability to have them there. Josh Marshall said there is a bee hotel at the garden already. Elaine says the bee hotel is passive, not an active honey hive. Josh says he has three hives and he would be more comfortable walking up to them than encountering other types of bees or wasps. Alan Hardy said there would need to be a discussion with Primex on that as well to gauge the liability. Josh says if it's an extra burden, we shouldn't do it. The garden is an environment that will always have bees. The consensus is that a bee hive wouldn't be a good idea at this time.

• **Agricultural Rack Card Project:**

Josh Marshall passed around a couple prototypes he designed for the rack card. His card is two sided and says "We support Local Agriculture" on the front. John Porter asked if it were possible to make it one-sided. He worries someone won't flip it over to look at the back. Josh said if your goal is to have someone pick it up, they will automatically turn it over to look at the back. Design discussion ensued. Katie Phelps updated the listing of agriculture in Boscawen and provided that list to the Commissions. Alan noted that the information on this list will be used in the Emergency Management Plan to show where farms and commodities are located relative to any potential disaster situation. It will have a useful purpose beyond those intended when this section of the Master Plan was written. Members of the Commission went through the listing and picked farms with whom to make contact. Farmers will be asked if they would like to be included on the rack card and, if so, their farm's name, their name, products and contact information if they so desire. In addition, we will ask if they are interested in serving on the Agricultural Commission.

• **Educational Program:**

Vice-Chair Elaine Clow expressed her desire to step down as the responsible person for this AgComm program. She has been organizing the educational program since 2011. Her time is being called into a number of different directions and she would like someone else to take over. The Commission recognized the hard work that goes into planning and scheduling the speakers for the program. Elaine says part of the trouble is you never know how many people will show up to any one particular event. Chairman Keegan suggested changing the pace. Part of the transition could include continuing the program but doing fewer events. He also suggested recruiting new members – potentially a master gardener that can teach a class. Tina Larochelle says it's difficult to find someone inexpensive to come out and teach like the Cooperative Extension does. Discussion will continue at the April meeting.

Motion to adjourn made by Josh Marshall, and seconded by Tina Larochelle. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Next meeting of the Commission will be April 13, 2017 at 7pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Katie Phelps