

Town of Boscawen
Agricultural Commission
Meeting Minutes – Draft
Boscawen Municipal Complex
December 14, 2017 7:00 pm

Members Present: John Keegan – Chair, Bill Bevans – Vice-Chair, Rusty Colby, John Porter.

Members Absent: Joshua Marshall, Tina Larochelle.

Ex-Officio Absent: Ken Marshall

Ex-Officio Present: Roger Sanborn

Others Present: Linda Chandonnet – Recording Secretary, Adele Sanborn – Guest, David Bishop – Guest, Cara Penley - Guest.

Staff Absent: Alan Hardy, Planning & Community Development Director, Kellee Jo Easler, Planning & Community Development Assistant.

Chairman Keegan called the meeting to order at 7:13pm with a voting board.

Roll call made by Chairman Keegan.

Review and Acceptance of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Chairman Keegan asked if anyone had any changes to the previous minutes from 11/09/17 and there were no changes made.

Motion made to accept the October minutes by John Porter and seconded by Bill Bevans amended. All in favor, none opposed.

Land Use Happenings:

- Guest speaker Adele Sanborn, owner of Twiggs Gallery at 254 King Street, in conjunction with the Boscawen Old Home Day Committee (BOHD) is planning an Art Show. Hopefully, this would bring more Boscawen residents into the gallery and introduce some of the poets, writers and artists along with their work. Adele would like to include a ‘get together’ featuring Boscawen old timers who have farmed, logged, and worked the land in town. Adele discussed her ideas with the Commission Members, everyone seemed enthusiastic about the concept. Adele will come back in 3 months and will keep the Committee up-to-date. Meanwhile, several individuals were identified to contact. Adele is trying have the Boscawen Historical Society do a corner in the Twiggs Gallery and highlight past Boscawen Old Home Days. The event would have to be either July 28th, 2018 or August 18th, 2018.

Chairman Keegan introduced-the Fam Credit East Presenters and provided a brief recap of the three prior meetings in which property tax issues were discussed. David Bishop, Branch Manager, Farm Credit East and Cara Penley, Certified General Appraiser, Farm Credit East. He asked John Porter to start by asking questions to them:

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Mr. Porter asked them with getting a few potential farm operations coming into town and how will they get taxed, as a commercial factory or a barn? He has heard of loss capital and single use as a way to give a little help to farmers, so they wouldn't be assessed at peak value. How to you handle giving a farmer fair assessment on a new building that goes up and the first day the farmer uses it that it goes down by half.

Mr. Bishop answered they aren't the tax law experts and are based on appraisal prospective, what they are worth and what goes into them. He mentioned it's also on 3 concepts of single use, technology and where equipment ends and structure begins and they are users of this data. They use the perspective of the market value and practical usage of these facilities. To answer Mr. Porter's question about the value going down, he stated it would be the builder and not the land owner.

Ms. Penley discussed the loss capital single use concept and began by asking if you could build your own facility or buy another one which one are you going to pay more for? Obviously you want those factors in a certain way, so if you're not going to get those you're going to pay less. When people go to look at a property they need to look at what they are using it for and are they intending on using that asset for a while because if they see a newer facility sell in general her rule of thumb for a specialized property is loss capital that next day after it's built could be anywhere from 10% to 50% and that is usually captured in her appraisals when she looks at depreciation. In regards to RSA: 79F when you have something of a specialized nature you're going to have more lost capital or depreciation in regards to your physical depreciation the wear and tear on the building and functional.

Mr. Bishop mentioned that he's using the appraisals for his use on the credit and lending perspective. His staff is using the appraisals for estate planning and also for buying and selling. So if an assessor is looking at market value at a starting point and taxed on the market value that won't be the same as cost of the construction. But if cost of construction is where one starts then the next question is what does the depreciation curve look like and how is that going to change over time? That depreciation curve is going to look different for different types of property.

Mr. Porter asked if any Avitar assessors ever reaches out to them for information? Ms. Penley replied it's not typical and usually she is the one asking them the questions to clarify. She doesn't rely on the assessment to determine her appraised value because they are both separate and the methodology is very different. Mr. Bishop added when an assessor goes about their tasks there are rules they have to follow and need to keep it a consistent methodology across the entire spectrum and how they approach it. As far as specialized structures he does see a wide variation of town municipalities and how they approach the assignment. Ms. Penley added that identification of what you have is also a big issue you have come up is making sure the assessor understands what that specialized improvement is, so they can find the right information to assess it.

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Chair Keegan asked if the assessors are considering the concept of loss as they are? Ms. Penley couldn't answer that question but explained how she does her assessment with 3 approaches.

- Sales comparisons
- Cost approach
- Income thru sales for some commercial properties

Mr. Bishop said that assessors could be looking at this from a standpoint of what they assess is a cost, and if they don't have market data and are doing something specialized the most common thing they would be looking at a cost less depreciation. Then depreciation becomes very important.

There was discussion about the determining of items and if they are equipment or a structure, or if it's moveable or permanent and how it's taxed. Mr. Keegan asked if there is any way to start an educational process where this question if it's equipment of structure single use could be explained. Mr. Bishop stated there are several organizations to help familiarize with the rules and the tax base. Mr. Porter stated that the audience would be more with Avitar than Selectmen and Mr. Bishop agreed. Chair Keegan asked Mr. Porter if there was anything going on with Corporate Extension with the issues of how farms are assessed? Mr. Porter replied he didn't think so. Chair Keegan stated that it's an education issue but where are the resources to put the data together? Mr. Porter replied Farm Credit is the one who has all the data.

Old Business:

- Treasurers Report: Chair Keegan asked the Commissioners to review the Treasurer's Report.

Motion made to accept the Treasurer's Report by Mr. Bevans and seconded by Mr. Colby, All in favor, none opposed.

- 2018 Budget: Chair Keegan stated he thought either the \$2,500 or the \$2,000 would meet the Commission's needs in 2018.

Motion made to accept the \$2,000.00 bill for 2018 budget by Mr. Bevans and seconded by Mr. Colby, All in favor, none opposed.

- Crete Banner is up: Selectman Sanborn reported the three selectmen presented the banner to the Cretes. The Cretes were very pleased with the banner.
- Educational Program: Chairman Keegan reported he had contacted Dot Perkins at Cooperative Extension. She has yet to find a Master Gardener who is interested in working with us.

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- Community Garden: Chair Keegan has no current update.

- Site visit report: John Porter reviewed the highlights of the site report included in the Commissioners meeting book. He and Commissioner Josh Marshall visited the Welch's on December 5, 2017 to observe the goats in this residential setting. The goats are well taken care of, the animals were very clean, well secured with no manure odor. The goats are more like pets than farm animals. Commissioner Porter thinks the owners are doing a great job caring for the goats and is recommending the Commission support the ZBA granting a special exception.,. He noted that keeping the site visit process in place and working with the ZBA is a good idea because not everyone would follow best practices. With this process in place each case can be reviewed and decided in the best interest of the community.

New Business:

- Farm Stands work status: Chairman John Keegan will talk to Alan Hardy and Kellee Easler for a status update.

Annual Report: Will be due January 20, 2018 and volunteers are needed to contribute to the report. Commissioners will be contacted by the Chair.

- Review of Lorraine Merrill letter: Chair Keegan wrote a letter to Lorraine Merrill thanking her for her service as Commissioner of Agriculture and for her support of this Agricultural Commission. Commissioners reviewed the letter and supported sending it to her.
- Meeting time discussion: Chairman John Keegan asked the Committee if they would be open to the possibility of changing the Agriculture Committee meetings time. To be discussed at the January meeting.

Motion to adjourn made by Bill Bevans and seconded by Rusty Colby. All in favor, none opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for January 11, 2018 at 7:00pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda Chandonnet

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