

**MERRIMACK AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 9, 2016**

Meeting was called to order by President Bob McCabe at 7:12 p.m.

Present: Ron Miner, Don Miner, Bess Parks; Absent Paul Drone

No Comment from the Press or Public

- a. **Summer Market Update and Vendor Packets:** Bob will be sending out vendor packets starting in January. With a mailing list of 300 possible vendors, core vendors will be given first choice for available spaces. Discussed limiting the number of vendors offering the same products, i.e. maple/honey/oils /vinegars etc. It appears there is not enough purchasers to support these duplicate offerings, creating discontent among those vendors. The goal is offer a variety of products to satisfy both producers and consumers.
- b. **Winter Market:** The winter market has been slow to start, as vendors who normally participate restock from the seasonal fairs and other venues they attend. Don discussed the input from several face book comments re: day and time of the market, where some potential customers preferred a different date and time. Both markets are set up on a Wednesday, with time between 3-6, that, not only works best for the vendors, those running the markets, and location availability. While the commission appreciates feedback, it is not always possible to accommodate every shopper's needs. Don also brought up the subject of increased advertising with incentives to attract more customers, suggesting a grand opening, offering a free vendor space for that day, a door prize to include various vendor offerings. Don will inquire about the use of the town trailer, along with information on use and costs of advertising on local bill boards.
- c /d **4H Summer Camps/Scholarships:** Discussion on which direction commission should pursue regarding various scholarships. The thought to provide a week's tuition to the 4H camp was reviewed. From the paperwork presented there are various options to consider. Bob will consult with the 4H leader Jolee Chase on where the need is most and report at the next meeting. Presently, a yearly donation is made to 4H to provide Merrimack members to provides additional monetary support with their agricultural endeavors. Gifts certificates were given to first place winners at the Hillsborough Fair, and a college scholarship was given to a Merrimack student studying environmental science.
- e. **Community garden mailing packet/2017 Class/postage:** The gardens have been cleaned up, water system winterized, and meter removed by the Merrimack Water District. Bob will rototill and apply a cover crop. Thank you's to Tom and Ann Hamlin for their help with the gardens, and the Merrimack Water District for their continued support in providing water for the gardeners. Bob announced that the Gardeners education session will be March 1,

2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Merrimack Library downstairs in the Klump Room. Flyer also attached.

- f. **UNH Classes:** See attached.
- g. **Bug Alert:** Ticks are still out there harboring in the leaves, wet area, so be cautious and check daily persons and pets.
- h. **Horse Sense:** Bess reported on additional horse health tips related to good practices for equine biosecurity at home, boarding facilities, show ground and the track. 1. Be sure to vaccinate. 2. Don't submerge ends of water hoses in water buckets, as they harbor disease causing bacteria or viruses. Clean troughs routinely. 3. Don't share or swap buckets of water/feed/hay nets. Other horses using it may have pathogens. 4. Don't share tack or other equipment in the barn with different horses. Clean bits after use. 5. Use separate grooming tools for each horse, 6. Use specifically designed pitch forks and wheelbarrows for animals that are sick. 7. Request visitors to use a foot bath, 8. Isolate/quarantine sick horses.
- i. **History of Farming in Merrimack.** Ron has started his research on James Mastricola, with a more detailed report at the December 14, 2016 meeting.
- j. **Treasurer's report:** Farmer's market balance as 11/01/2016 \$5,114.18. Community garden balance 11/01/2016 \$3,492.32, with a combined balance \$8,606.50. The Winter market balance as of 11/01/2016 is \$1,407.50.
- k. **Minutes:** Reviewed minutes of October 12, 2016, with corrections on item c. from Ron to Don for purchase of signage. Item d. Bob will rototill not (plow) community garden. Accepted with corrections 4-0-0.

No comments from the press or public.

No comments from the commission.

Motion made by Bess to adjourn at 8:32 p.m., second by Ron Miner, motion carried 4-0-0.
Next meeting December 14, 2016.

Respectfully Submitted
Bess-Arden Parks
Acting Secretary