

**MERRIMACK AGRICULTURE COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**FEBRUARY 14, 2018**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Bob McCabe at 7:10 p.m.

Present: Don Miner, Ron Miner III, Paul Drone, Bess Parks

No Comments from the Press or Public

New Business:

- a. WINTER MARKET UPDATE: Don reports that a several more vendors are expected to participate throughout the spring months. Customer traffic should also increase with warmer weather and longer daylight hours. Don continues to keep all media connections updated on market events.
- b. DISCUSSION ON JOINING THE NEW HAMPSHIRE FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION: Bob and Don will investigate the benefit of the Agriculture Commission joining the NH Market Association, and report back to the board with their findings at the March 14, 2018 meeting.
- c. DISCUSSION of POTENTIAL SLATE of OFFICIERS FOR 2018: Bob reported that there has not been an election of board members in three years. The need for a co-chair was discussed; also, if the present board members would remain in their respected positions. Bob McCabe as Chairman, Bess Parks as Acting Secretary and Treasurer. Discussion tabled until the March 14, 2018 meeting.
- d. REMINDER OF THE COMMUNITY GARDEN INFORMATION BOOTH: The Community Garden spring meeting will be held March 7, 2018, from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the John O’Leary Senior Center. Gardeners planning to garden at Wasserman Park can pick up their 2018 agreement forms and garden rules. There will also be a voluntary seed swap, with a raffle for one free garden plot. The drawing will be held at 5:30 p.m.
- e. UPCOMING WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS – SEE ATTACHED:
- f. THE AG REPORT: Ron reported that desperate dairy farmers were given a lifeline in the Federal Budget in Burlington, Vermont. Less than a day after passing a massive budget deal in Washington, Senator Patrick Leahy was in Vermont touting a farmer’s bill in the federal package that secured more than \$1.1 billion in subsidies to stabilize the dairy industry. Dairy farmers have seen their incomes steadily decline in recent years, and with milk prices at a 20 year low, there have been reports of farmers selling off their herds. The new bill extends and expands the margin protection program, which went into effect last year. The program provides a subsidized insurance plan if famers lose money on milk production. The bill also lowers premiums that will work for all farmers matter how big or small.
- g. BUG ALERT: Bob reported spotting early evidence of Gypsy moths throughout the area. Gypsy moths are one of the most destructive pests of deciduous hardwood trees. Introduced in the mid 1800’s in Massachusetts to create a silkworm industry. They became a pest in the region within a

decade destroying vast amounts of foliage. They usually emerge in late Spring and early detection is imperative to their control. Maintaining a proper watering and feeding schedule for target trees boosts the trees resistance to the pest and reduces the number of eggs laid. There are various methods of control, including traps, blasts of water, wiping away egg masses; along with using Trichogrammatid Wasps, or spraying with horticultural or dormant oils onto egg masses. For additional information or questions contact Bob at ([bob.mccabe@comcast.net](mailto:bob.mccabe@comcast.net))

- h. HORSE SENSE: With spring just around the corner, Bess suggested horse owners consider contacting their veterinarian office early to secure a visit time for their equine vaccinations. Some veterinarians offer reduced pricing for appointments made while in various geographically areas. It is important that all equine receive basic vaccinations, including Eastern/Western Encephalitis, Tetanus, Rabies, & West Nile, including a Coggins test. If traveling, a flu vaccine may be recommended along with a health certificate. It is always best to consult your veterinarian for other vaccines recommended for specific geographically areas.
- i. TREASURERS REPORT: As of January 31, 2018, the Summer Market fund account was \$4,105.22. The Community Garden fund account \$2,504.55, with a combined total of \$6,609.77. The Winter Market fund account \$687.00.
- j. MINUTES: The minutes were accepted as read by Don, Ron seconded, motion carried 5-0-0.

No Comments from the Press or Public.

Comments from the Commission:

Bob wanted to remind all businesses that grow and sell their own agricultural products at farmers market or at a farm stand the need to have their scales certified by the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture Division of Weight and Measures. There are fee clinics throughout the State for growers who have three or fewer scales under 100 lb. capacity and no other commercial devices on their license. Scales must be clean before they will be tested. Attendees should bring: 1. Legal for trade scale(s) with accessories. 2. Current scale license (if grower has one) and any renewal forms and/or payments due (no credit cards are accepted at this time). For more information go to: ([www.agriculture.nh.gov](http://www.agriculture.nh.gov)) for clinic schedules and updates. It should be noted that only produce sold by weight is required to use a certified scale licensed by the State, not produce sold by the piece.

Bob discussed the cost of printer ink and the need to purchase a new supply. Also, the need for twine and flags to mark of the garden plots at the Community Garden. The request for \$100.00 dollars to cover the cost of the twine and flags and \$112.00 for an ink purchase was brought to a vote with Don making a motion to allocate the \$212.00 dollars, Ron seconded, motion carried 5-0-0.

Don made the motion to adjourn at 7:48p.m., Paul seconded, motion carried 5-0-0.

The next meeting will be held March 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Matthew Thornton Room, East Wind.

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks  
Acting Secretary