

**MERRIMACK AGRICUTURAL COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**MARCH 14, 2018**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Bob McCabe at 7:14 p.m.

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

No Comments from the Press or Public

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. WINTER MARKET UPDATE: Due to inclement weather on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018, and unavailable space at the John O'Leary Senior Center on March 14, 2018, the Farmers Market was cancelled on those dates. The market to resume on March 21, 2018. The Community Garden Information meeting also planned for March 7, 2018 from 3:00-6:00 pm was rescheduled for March 21, 2018, 3:00-6:00 also at the Senior Center.
- b. DISCUSSION ON JOINING THE NH FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION: The NHFA is a non-profit organization in support of farmers markets, farmers and agriculture as part of their mission to increase local foods and ensure viable sales outlets in NH. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to join the NHFA for one year at \$25.00 dollars. The Board will review the benefits again at time of renewal in 2019. Paul made the motion to approve \$25.00 dollars for one-year subscription to the NH Farmers Market Association, Ron seconded., motion carried 5-0-0.
- c. DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2018: Bob presented the Board with a list of Chairman Responsibilities for review; with the understanding should a Vice Chairman position be filled; the Vice Chairman would assume half the work load. The Vice Chairman would also work with the Chairman on an on-going basis. Bob also asked Board members to assist with those line items that best suit their expertise. A list of Chairman Responsibilities is attached.
- d. REIMBURSEMENT FOR FUNERAL FLOWERS: Don made the motion to reimbursement \$60.00 dollars to Bess for funeral flowers sent in memory of Judith Lastowka, wife of John Lastowka, past Chairman of the Agricultural Commission, Ron seconded, motion carried 5-0-0.
- e. BILL BOARDS: It has been brought to the Boards attention that two Bill Boards, one near the Merrimack Post Office, and one across from Vault Storage have one side of each board available for advertising, The cost for half a year is \$500 (\$,1000.00 for a year) for the smaller footage sign near the Merrimack Post Office, and \$1,600 for half a year (\$3,200 for a year) for the larger size board. Don expressed the need for additional advertising for the

farmers market and vendors who participate and feels the Bill Boards would help with that endeavor. Bess mentioned that a decision on the digital display board, purchased by Bob for advertising for the Farmers Market and Community Garden has yet to be finalized. The Board also has yearly financial commitments, which include the annual scholarship, 4 H gift certificates for the Hillsboro County Fair, the 4-H educational fund and other in business expenses. Don will investigate the cost of the vinyl graphics that would fit either sign for a better understanding of the final cost should this form of advertising be considered. Discussion to continue at the April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 meeting.

- f. UPCOMING WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS – See Attached
- g. THE AG REPORT: Ron discovered an article written by Shawn Hackett on the” Lack of Solar Activity” that could create food scarcity by year 2023. Sunspot activity has been monitored for the last 250 years, and cycles occur every 11 years. At one end of the 11-year cycle, the sun is relatively quiet, meaning, there are few sunspots and flares. The sun is less active every 200 years and “all the weather variables get turned upside down”. If this pans out, Hackett expects to see a world with localized famines and food scarcity. He’s not out to spread gloomy news, but it may not be pleasant. New ways for growing food in this more difficult environment will need to be developed.
- h. HORSE SENSE: Equine Influenza: Like people, horses also get the flu. Equine influenza is a highly contagious respiratory virus that can put your equines out of work for weeks, and potentially cause a serious secondary infection. Clinical signs might include being lethargic, not eating or interested in feed, coughing, enlarged lymph nodes, nasal discharge or elevated temperature. Your veterinary will probably advise offering plenty of water, and hay, although the horse may not be interested in a few days. Banamine to lower the temperature, unless a secondary bacterial infection ensues, where an antibiotic would be the prescribed treatment, with rest and waiting for the virus to run its course. It is important to keep the equine drinking and eating. Equine influenza is the second most common virus in horses, and horses traveling should receive a flu shot to ensure a healthy horse for those planned events away from home. Always consult your veterinarian with any questions regarding vaccinations.
- i. BUG ALERT: While lady bugs are invading our homes, other than being a nuisance, they are harmless. Ticks on the other hand have been reported to be as active as ever, despite the extreme cold throughout the winter. Use tick repellant sprays, check oneself and pets after spending time outside to prevent unsuspecting medical complications.
- j. TREASURERS REPORT: As of February 28, 2018, the Agriculture Commission Summer Farmer’s Market Fund Account is \$ 3, 949.43. The Community Garden Fund account is \$2,406.55, with a combined total of \$6,355.98. The Winter Farmer’s Market fund account is \$600.00.

- k. MINUTES: With the correction of the last word in the last sentence re: Next meeting, (wind) should be (wing), Don made the motion to accept the February 14, 2018 minutes, Paul seconded, motioned carried 5-0-0

No Comments from the Press or Public

Comments from the Commission: Ron brought up the subject of filming various agriculture activities the commission is involved with, such as the farmers market, community garden, 4-H exhibitors at the Hillsborough County fair and share on the web site media page, face book, etc. Ron is willing to take on this project, and report back at the April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 meeting with further developments. Bob requested the appropriation of \$35.00 to cover the cost of having the Community Garden soil tested at UNH. Don made the motion to approve the \$35.00 for soil testing, Ron seconded., motion carried 5-0-0.

Don made the motion to adjourn at 8:15 p.m., Paul seconded, motion carried 5-0-0.

The next meeting will be held April 11, 2018, at 7:00pm, in the Matthew Thornton Room, East Wing.

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks  
Acting Secretary