

## **MERRIMACK AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

### **APPROVED MINUTES**

**JANUARY 9, 2013**

John Lastowka, chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. Present were John Lastowka, Bob McCabe, Cynthia Warhola, Bess Parks, Pete Gagnon.

Allan Swenson, a consultant to the Agricultural Commission since its inception, resigned as of November 12, 2012. His farming experience has been very helpful to the Commission. Allan Swenson's expertise will be missed on this Commission.

Bess Parks reports that there has been nothing new going on with our finances so report remains same as last month.

Bob McCabe had a sample of the new trifold document to be mailed out to all the past gardeners with possibility of a few changes. Please check in once a month by e-mail or message board. A gardener needs to notify the Garden Manager if you are abandoning your plot or are not able to continue caring for it. The Community Garden is looking for a hand lawn mower (hopefully a donation) so any of the gardeners could use it to keep things tidy between garden plots. Bob will also need to buy supplies for this paper work, such as stamps, paper and ink. Pete Gagnon made a motion to make \$200.00 available for this purpose. This motion was voted on and was unanimous 5-0-0.

Bob McCabe wrote a letter to Sherri Kalish thanking the Parks and Recreation Department for allowing us to use the land at Wasserman Park for the Community Garden and read a reply from Sherri saying they were happy to be a part of it.

The Future of Farmer's Market; John, Bob, and Cynthia collaborated on a letter to the Hardman Group thanking them for allowing us to use their land for our Farmer's Market public events during the summer and asking if they would approve setting up a temporary storage shed to store our cones, tent, etc. The Farmers Market has a need for more volunteers so a discussion centered on this issue. Bob had spoken to the counselor at the high school to see if anyone in the Gateway program would be interested but no response so far. Other ideas that might help: cutting back number of weeks as there seems to be far fewer customers there after school starts in September. Cindy Warhola took an informal poll of vendors on this subject and they wanted the Market to stay open as long as possible. Perhaps one of the vendors might be willing to collect the fee from other vendors, or perhaps all vendors could pay for whole season. Some towns do this. John Lastowka will speak to the Town Manager with some of our ideas to see if she can offer any ideas that would be of assistance.

A Scholarship check was mailed out to UNHCE for Silver Stirrups 4H group from Merrimack, NH from the Farmers Market Funds, on October 15, 2012. Pete Gagnon moved to donate \$200.00 scholarship fund to the Silver Stirrups 4H group from Merrimack, NH for 2013. The vote was 5-

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0-0 in favor. Jolee Chase the 4H educator at UNHCE will be the contact person that will hold the scholarship funds until they are requested.

A letter was suggested to go to the Town Planner with dated information on when the Farmer's Markets will be scheduled for 2014 season. This letter has to be in by September 1, 2013

John Lastowka will be speaking at the town library before the Historical Society about his family's heritage and agriculture on January 15, 2013.

Election of officers: Pete Gagnon moved John Lastowka to be Chairperson, Bess Parks seconded. Vote was 5-0-0. Bess Parks moved Bob McCabe to be vice-chair, Cindy Warhola seconded. Vote was 5-0-0. Bob McCabe moved Bess Parks to be treasurer, Pete Gagnon seconded. Vote was 5-0-0. A permanent secretary is still needed. Trudy Currier agreed to be temporary secretary until a permanent one is appointed.

Minutes of June 26, 2012 were read. Cindy Warhola moved to accept, Bess Parks seconded 5-0-0. Minutes of October 10, 2012 were read and accepted by Bob McCabe, seconded by Cindy Warhola. Vote was 4-1-0. Pete Gagnon abstained. Minutes of November 14, 2012 were read and accepted by Bob McCabe, seconded by Bess Parks. Vote 4-2-0. John Lastowka and Pete Gagnon abstained. Minutes of December 12, 2012 were read and Bob McCabe moved to accept, Bess Parks seconded. Vote was 4-1-0. John abstained.

Comments from public; Nancy Gagnon wanted to know why John Lastowka abstained from the December minutes vote. John was not present that night because he was out of town on business and not present at the meeting.

Next meeting will be on February 13, 2013. A special meeting may be needed for more details on mailings and dates for the Farmers Market, this will be determined after John's meeting with the Town Manager, Eileen Cabanel.

Bess Parks moved to adjourn. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Trudy Currier