

**MERRIMACK AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
DECEMBER 9, 2020**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Bob McCabe at 6:53 pm.

Present: Ron Miner III, Paul Drone, Bess Parks

Comments from the Press or Public

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **NEW IDEAS FOR 2021:** Bob would like the board to continue with their efforts to find ways to connect with new ideas and potential new board members. Suggestions include reaching out to FFA students in the high school setting, graduate students, 4-H members, or through social media, Advertising in local publications, posting notices in local businesses or notices on the Town TV channel could also be an option. The Board welcomes anyone over 18, to join the Commission in supporting its mission in supporting agriculture and related activities in Merrimack. For more information, contact Bob McCabe at (bobmccabe@comcast.net)
- b. **ANNUAL REPORT:** Bob mentioned that updated reports to be included in the Merrimack annual report will be due soon. Information could include how the additional safety precautions imposed by the covid-19 virus pandemic affected the summer farmers market vendor and customer participation. Increase or decrease of community garden plots rented. Other Commission accomplishments, including 4-H donations and planting a Red Delicious Apple tree at Wasserman Park honoring Nancy and Arthur "Pete" Gagnon for their many years of service to the Town of Merrimack, and Agricultural Commission.
- c. **MAILINGS FOR COMMUNITY GARDEN AND FARMER'S MARKET:** Bob will soon be mailing out summer market vendor and community garden applications for the 2021 season. He is in need of one box of self-seal envelopes, a box of labels, and two rolls of postage stamps. Paul made the motion to approve up to \$225.00 dollars to purchase the box of envelopes, box of labels, and two rolls of postage stamps. Ron seconded; motion carried 4-0-0.
- d. **SCHOLARSHIP:** Bob received word from Holly Stone who is enrolled at New England College in Biddeford, Maine, not the branch in Henniker, NH. She has been invited to attend the January 13, 2021 meeting (weather permitting), or speak with the board via the telephone regarding her studies. Holly is the recipient of the Agricultural Commission \$500.00 2020 scholarship and will be presented to her by the Commission.
- e. **UNH EXTENSION CLASSES/WEBINARS:** See Attached.

- f. HORSE SENSE: 4 Tips for Safe Holiday Decorating Your Barn: Decorating your barn for the holiday is fun. But you'll want to take some precautions to keep your horses safe for the season. 1. Avoid greenery and garlands that incorporate toxic plants. Yew for example, even a small amount can be fatal to horses. 2. Hang tempting decorations out of reach. A stocking filled with carrots, will likely be pulled into the stall and eaten within minutes – worse case consequences could include choke or colic. Keep all decorations well away from the stall door and turnout space. 3. Inspect all wiring on lights. The insulation on older light strings may deteriorate over the years, and pests may chew on the cords. When buying new lights, select those labeled for outdoor use with bulbs that do not heat up. Shut off all lights when you leave the barn at night, or use a timer or remote device to turn them off from the house before you turn in. 4. Don't frighten the horses. Large rustling red bows, jingling sleigh bells and singing Santa's may put you in the holiday mood, but for the horses unaccustomed to the sights and sound, they can be terrifying. Approach your horse cautiously with any unfamiliar decorations. Read his/her body language carefully and respect any fear he/she may have.
- g. TREASURER'S REPORT: Balances as of November 30, 2020. The Farmer's Market Fund Account is \$ 4,560.09. The Community Garden Fund Account is \$ 1,308.26, with a combined total of \$ 5,868.35.
- h. MINUTES: Ron made the motion to accept the minutes as read, Paul seconded, motion carried 4-0-0.

No Comments from the Press or Public.

Comments from the Commission: The Commission received a check for \$ 7.00 from the Shaw's bag purchase program. Shaw's selected the Agricultural Commission to receive the donation from those grocery bag purchases.

With spring just around the corner, gardeners are reminded to start planning their garden for the upcoming planting season. Check seed catalogs, order early for the best selection and clean tools.

Motion to Adjourn: Paul made to motion to adjourn at 7:20 pm, Ron seconded, motion carried 4-0-0.

The next meeting of the Merrimack Agricultural Commission will be held January 13, 2021 at 7:00 pm, in the Matthew Thornton Room, East Wing.

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks
Acting Secretary