

MERRIMACK AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
JANUARY 13, 2016

Chairman Bob McCabe called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Present were Pete Gagnon, Don Miner, Eber Currier, and Bess Parks.

New Business

- (a) **Pre-interview with Ron Miner III:** Ron took a course in Farm Mechanics at Alvirne High School and would like to be a full time member on the Commission. He has some sheep and is very interested in farming but financially is not able to do that full time so he works for a manufacturing company. He would like to help keep the Town of Merrimack aware that there are small farmers locally. He is 20 years old and well-known for the fact that he was the very first resident to have his own talk show on Merrimack cable. Some of the Commissioners remember what a great job he did – at the age of 8. Bess moved to accept him as a member, Pete seconded. Vote was 5-0-0. Now he just has to go through a few more steps and be accepted by the Town Council.
- (b) **Farmer's Market Update:** Bob McCabe is working on the big mailing that will be going out to 20 vendors and 200 farms in the area. Pete moved for Bob to have \$275 for ink, stationary, and postage. Bess seconded. Vote was 5-0-0.
- (c) **Winter Farmer's Market:** There were only 7 vendors last week but those who came were buying – those vendors were happy with that and realize it's going to take awhile for the public to become accustomed to going to the Senior Center on Thursday afternoon. Plus it was closed the two weeks in December over the holidays. Shaleigh is getting the news on Facebook so that should help also.
- (d) **Community Garden Update:** There will be a meeting on March 1, 2016 in the Klump Room at the public library at 7 p.m. for all interested gardeners. Bob will be handing out applications for garden plots at Wasserman Park and discussing just how to care for your plants. There will also be a seed swap table. Bob also sends two soil samples up to the University for testing and they let him know what he needs to do to prepare the soil for planting. Don Miner moved to give Bob \$75 to pay for this. Eber Currier seconded. Vote was 5-0-0.
- (e) The Commission reviewed the 2015 annual report before turning it in to the Town for printing in the Annual Town report.
- (f) **UNH Extension classes:** Pete Gagnon and Bob McCabe will be attending a class on Direct Marketing at Granite College on Feb. 11th and 18th. Don Miner moved to Pay \$60.00 for both of them to take part in this. Bess seconded. Vote was 5-0-0. There will also be informational meetings at the Farm & Forest Expo on January 20 & 21st at the Radisson in Manchester.
- (g) **Bug Alert:** Too warm for the ticks to have died off so still need to take precautions when working in wooded areas.

- (h) **Horse Sense:** Bess Parks spoke of the Rules of Etiquette at a Horse Arena: You need to school your horse on how to behave with other horses. Leave plenty of passing room, no smoking, do not ride alone, wear a helmet, avoid spectators, no dogs, no loose horses, all gates closed so no horses can escape. The noise of sliding doors can spook the horses, as can ice and snow. If there is a problem, everyone dismount at once.
- (i) **Kinder Morgan Pipeline Update:** Townspeople and Town Boards are working diligently trying to keep the pipeline out of Merrimack.
- (j) **Treasurer's Report:** Farmer's Market \$3,832.49, Community Garden \$2,796.66, making a total of \$6,629.15. Winter's Farmer Market had a deficit of \$105. These were the totals as of December 31, 2015.
- (k) **Minutes:** Review draft minutes from December 9, 2015. Pete Gagnon moved to accept the minutes with amendments, Eber Currier seconded. Vote was 4-0-0.

Comments from the Commission: Pete still has some peppers on tall plants in his greenhouse for anyone who wants to come and pick them.

Don Miner moved to adjourn, Bess Parks seconded. Vote was 5-0-0. Next meeting will be on February 10, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Trudy Currier, Acting Secretary