

**MERRIMACK AGRICULTURE COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**APRIL 12, 2017**

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob McCabe at 7:14pm

Present: Ron Miner III, Bess Parks, Don Miner

Absent: Paul Drone

No Comments from the Press or Public

New Business:

- a. **Summer Market:** Bob has purchased the weather proof plywood for the replacement sign at the dump entrance. Funds for this having been approved at the March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. Bob also purchased the piece of aluminum to repair the Vault Storage sign. The cost was \$4 dollars over the \$50 dollars approved at the March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. Don made the motion to amend this line item, to approve the additional \$4 dollars, seconded by Ron, motion carried 4-0-0. Bob has requested \$34.00 for the purchase of stamps for the post cards to be mailed to vendors. Bob also brought to the Commission's attention that the yearly membership renewal for both Farm Bureau \$75.00 dollars and the N.H. Farmer's Market Association's, \$25.00 dollars was coming due. Don mentioned that he and several other farm market representatives have resigned from the NHFMA. New Commission members appointed to this organization appear to be leaning toward alliances with corporations, and not the best interests of the local farmer's markets. Don questioned whether or not our commission benefits enough to continue our membership. Bob will do further research and report his findings at the May 10, 2017 meeting, where a decision will be made to renew or not. Along with our winter and summer market, there will be an independently run farmer's market May 13 at the Tractor Supply on Daniel Webster Highway. It is not known if this market will be ongoing or just a one-time event. Bob was pleased to announce that Shaleigh Nelson will be returning as the Farmers' Market Aide.
- b. **Winter Market:** Don reports that both vendors and customers vary from week to week. It is hoped the warmer temperature and longer daylight hours will encourage increased participation. He indicated the vendors are anxious to return to the summer market for better visibility and customer traffic, and asked, if the Commission would consider returning to the Vault Storage location earlier than the June 14 opening date. This will be considered.
- c. **Community Garden Update:** It is still too wet to rototill the garden area, hopefully within the next week or two. There are still plots available, and applications can be picked up at the town hall on the table inside the entrance. It is hoped that there will be better gardener participation in donating surplus produce to low income families and the elderly.
- d. **4-H Donation:** Jolee Chase, 4-H leader, contacted Don for Advance Scales number to proceed in acquiring a different weigh scale than originally planned. The purchase price would be \$1,295, plus transportation costs of approximately \$200-\$300, still to be determined. The 4-H group(s) will pay the additional funding above the \$1,210.00 dollars donated by the commission. Don recommended they also purchase a non-skid mat to protect the scale and prevent injuries to the livestock should they become unsteady, slip or fall.

- e. **Direction for 2017, i.e. Ideas:** There is a Worker Protection Standard (WPS), “Train the Trainer” workshop April 19, 2017 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at UNH School of Law in Concord. This is a pesticide license recertification for private and commercial applicators. Since January 2, 2017, new safety requirements for pesticide use have been in effect for employers and employees working in the production of agricultural commodities. The goal of these changes aim to: Reduce occupational pesticide exposure and incidents of related illness among agricultural workers and pesticide handlers covered by the standard and protect bystanders and others from exposure to agricultural pesticide use. See attached for more detailed information. Bob would like to attend this class, and asked for the Commission’s approval of the \$50.00-dollar registration fee. Was agreed that it would be beneficial for him to attend.
- f. **Upcoming Workshops:** See attached.
- g. **Horse Sense:** Bess offered some helpful hints on Fire Safety for Horse Barns. Spring is a good time to clean out clutter and cobwebs which fuel a fire if started. Keep fire extinguishers in appropriate locations, i.e. entrances, feed/tack rooms. Check new hay/bedding for heat, which can give off sufficient heat to start a fire. Keep both in well ventilated areas/lofts, use fans if necessary. Do not use electric heaters in plastic buckets. Practice an evacuation plan, day and night. Have secure areas to keep animals safe. Have wide enough drives/lanes for fire equipment, with street address/farm name clearly displayed at the entrance to the property. Leave important information/phone numbers with the fire department. If building a new barn, consider a sprinkling system, fire detectors and emergency power source should the power go out, no smoking signs are a must.
- h. **Treasurers Report:** To be read at the May 10, 2017.
- i. **History of Farming:** Ron’s great aunt’s daughter married Louis Sperry’s son, and while Louis was not a native of Merrimack or N.H., he worked and lived a varied and industrious life. Born in 1908 in Lincoln County, Kansas. His first job out of high school, was working with his uncle’s driving horses. He then worked on a 3 square (three miles) cattle farm, working there through the dust bowl. He recalled a lite cigarette 3 feet away looked like a flicker mile in the distance. Louis also worked for the railroad, in a rock quarry and shucking oysters. During the depression he trapped animals and sold their hides. In 1939 Louis moved to New York and then Long Island working as a cook. In 1942, he enlisted in the Marine Corps during WWII. After the war, he, his wife Bessie and children moved to Manchester NH to be nearer her family, selling pharmaceuticals. He also held jobs with Hood Ice Cream, worked in Boston repairing refrigeration units, returning to finish his career with Hood at 65. He continued to work elsewhere until 1995. He was presented with the Boston cane in April 2002, and passed away in November 2004.
- j. **Bug Alert:** All species are becoming active.
- k. **Minutes:** Minutes for March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 were reviewed, with motion made to accept by Don, Ron 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 4-0-0
- l. Approval for additional funds for post card stamps \$34.00, Farm Bureau dues \$75.00, Worker’s Production Standard “Train the Trainer” workshop (Bob McCabe) \$50.00. Total of \$159.00. Ron made the motion to accept as requested, Don seconded, motion carried 4-0-0

Comments from the Press or Public

Comments from the Commission: More vendors needed for both markets.

Motion to Adjourn by Don, Ron seconded motion carried 4-0-0.

Next Meeting scheduled for May 10, 2017

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks  
Acting Secretary

DRAFT