

**MERRIMACK AGRICULTURE COMMISSION
MINUTES
MARCH 8, 2017**

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob McCabe at 7:05pm.

Present: Ron Miner III, Paul Drone, Bess Parks

Absent: Don Miner

No Comments from the Press or Public

New Business:

- a. **Summer Market:** Mailings have gone out to vendors with several responses to date. Bob reported the sign at the entrance to the dump has deteriorated and needs to be replaced. It was decided to upgrade using a ¾ inch green weather proof plywood would be purchased at the cost of \$50 dollars. Also discussed was the repair to the Vault storage sign that was damaged during the 2016 market season. No assessed cost for that repair available now. A reminder was made that it is time to have scales calibrated for the market season. Paul made the motion to approve the \$50 for the sign repair, Ron seconded, motion carried 4-0-0.
- b. **Winter Market:** Don was not available to give a report on the winter market.
- c. **Community Garden Update:** Several commission members plus five avid gardeners attended the March 1, community garden information night. Bob presided over the informal gathering, going over the rules and regulations for the coming season. Many variety of seeds were available to share. Bob mentioned that it has become necessary to replace the cutting blades of the rototiller to be efficient in preparing the garden area, along with flags, stakes and baling twine to define the plots. Soil samples have been sent testing, results pending. Ron and Paul will also assist Bob ready the garden area for the season. Bob has requested \$250.00 to cover the rototiller repair, garden materials mentioned and cost of soil testing. Ron made the motion to appropriate the \$250.0, Paul seconded, motion carried 4-0-0
- d. **Discussion of 4-H Donation:** After much research and discussion it was found that Advance Scale could not provide the type of scale preferred and used by the 4-H State wide. The Commission agreed that \$1, 210.00 would be made available to the 4-H to purchase the scale that will best suit their needs. The scale will be kept at the New Boston Fair Grounds. Paul made the motion to appropriate the \$1,210.00, Ron seconded, motion carried 4-0-0
- e. **Direction for 2017, i.e. Idea:** Paul wanted to remind us all that Fisher cats will be out and about soon, so don't be alarmed if you hear their rather un-nerving mating scream. It is also time for bears to come out of hibernation, and it is advisable to remove bird feeders or other damage to property.
- f. **Upcoming Workshops/Seminars** – See Attached
- g. **Bug Alert:** Cabbage Aphids in Brussel Sprouts. Once cabbage aphids colonize in the forming heads, they can't be removed, rendering the sprouts unmarketable. When aphids are in the heads, they

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aren't affected by pesticide treatment and control becomes difficult. Contact your local Cooperative Extension service for more information and best management treatments.

- h. **Horse Sense:** Bess reminded horse owners to make timely veterinarian appointments for spring shots, Coggins test, equine physicals and health certificates needed to participate and enjoy whatever equine discipline you pursue.
- i. **Treasurer's Report:** The Summer Market balance is \$4,821.47, Community Garden balance \$3,414.82, with combined balance of \$8,236.29. The Winter Market balance is \$1,120.00.
- j. **History of Farming:** Ron discovered that his own ancestors were early supporting farmers in the Reed Ferry area of town. His grandmother was born on the farm in March of 1938 believed to be that of Fred and Mabel Hall. The family lived on the second floor of the 2-level home. Her father worked on the farm for several years before working for himself. It was a working farm with dairy cattle, a running saw mill, ice house, orchard, hay fields and garden growing a variety of produce. The farm covered the area from where Reeds Ferry School is presently, across Pearson Road, along Bedford Road to what is now Whispering Pines Road, which was then known as Twin Bridge Road. Twin Bridge Road was named for the two wooden bridges used by the stage coaches back in the day.
- k. **Minutes:** Review draft minutes from February 8, 2017. Several corrections made to item a. Motion made to accept minutes as corrected by Ron, Paul seconded, motion carried 4-0-0.

NO COMMENTS FROM THE PRESS OR PUBLIC.

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION: Reminder that daylight savings begins March 12th. Spring arrives on March 20th and time to start seeds and planning gardens.

Next meeting scheduled for April 12, 2017.

Bess made the motion to adjourn, Ron seconded, motion carried 4-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted
Bess-Arden Parks
Acting Secretary