

**MERRIMACK AGRICULTURE COMMISSION
MINUTES
AUGUST 9, 2017**

Meeting was called to order by President Bob McCabe at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Don Miner, Ron Miner III, Bess Parks

No Comments from the Press

Comments from the Public:

Annette Handy, Manager of the Educational Farm at Joppa Hill, Bedford, NH approached the commission to discuss the possibility of the commission funding two (2) fold-up fitting stands. The stands would be beneficial in milking the goats and shearing the sheep as part of the farms hands on camp program. The cost per stand is \$280.00, with shipping cost at \$145.62, for a total of \$705.62 for the two stands.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Don to approve the purchase, Ron seconded, with motion carried to approve the request 4-0-0.

There are twenty-one Merrimack residents currently enrolled in the camp programs ranging from ages four to eleven.

Joppa Hill's mission is to preserve a working farm for providing people of all ages with interactive educational experiences that create powerful connections with New Hampshire's agricultural heritage. See attached brochure, and Fold-up Fitting Stand information.

- a. Interview with potential new member postponed to the September 13 meeting.
- b. **SUMMER MARKET:** With prior approval from the commission board and a cap figure of \$3,000 dollar for bidding, Bob attended an auction offering electronic signs in Massachusetts. Of the selection available, only two were of interest, but was outbid. Bob had an opportunity to speak with others more knowledgeable about electronic signs, which will aid in a future purchase.

Shaelagh Nelson, our Farmer Market's Assistant Manager, inquired if the Board would consider paying her \$50.00 dollars per week to continue maintaining the updates of market activities on Face Book and Town web sites until the end of the market season. Members feel two or three times more reasonable for the cost, and will be discuss with Shaelagh before making a final decision.

Bob informed the board that the Catering vendor left, and while pleased with their involvement with our market, felt attending a market closer to where they conduct their business would be more profitable. Bob also informed the Board that our honey vendor John Blake's, grandson recently died. The Board will send a sympathy card.

As the farmers market is now about mid-season, fresher garden produce is coming in weekly. Customer traffic remains steady.

- c. **WINTER MARKET UPDATE:** Don reports that the space at the John O'Leary senior center had been secured for the winter market season.
- d. **DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL DONATIONS:** The Board received a letter from Shaelagh Nelson regarding the possibility of the commission offering scholarship monies again this year. Shaelagh will be a sophomore at the University of Vermont, continuing her studies in Environmental Science. The scholarship will provide the means to purchase text books and other resources pertaining to her studies. Letter of intent attached. A motion was made by Don to approve \$500.00-dollar scholarship for Shaelagh, Ron seconded, motioned carried 4-0-0
- e. **COMMUNITY GARDEN:** The Board extends thanks to Nancy and Pete Gagnon for their generous donations of vegetable plants to gardeners at the community garden. Tom Hanlon, along with another gardener will donate the produce grown to the Manchester Veterans homeless program or others in need.
- f. **WORKSHOPS:** See attached.
- g. **BUG ALERT:** Bob reports that Japanese beetles continue to be a problem, skeletonizing the leaves on many vegetable plants. White moth affects the corn crop by laying its eggs during the silk stage. A sign your corn has earworm, is when the tassel is bent over perpendicular.
- h. **HORSE SENSE:** Bess reminded horse owners that good overall coat care is key to avoiding many summer skin problems with their horses. Use appropriate measure to avoid sunburn, with protective cover ups, sunscreen, ointments. This also applies to insect allergies, although if itching is severe, consult your veterinarian, as steroids may be needed. Ringworm/Rain Rot and Scratches can be contagious, and should be treated with antifungal topical sprays, ointments and shampoos. Care needs to be taken to wear gloves and proper hand washing during treatments.
- i. **TREASURERS REPORT:** As of June 31st, 2017, Summer Farmer's Market: \$4,920.87, Community Garden \$3,435.12. with a combined total of \$8,355.99. Winter Market: \$977.12. As of July 31st, 2017, the Summer Farmer's Market: \$5,000.87, Community Garden \$3,435.12, combined total of \$8,435.99. Winter Market: \$977.50.
- j. **AGRICULTURAL NEWS:** With Corn now available, Ron shared a Corn Update from the USDA. As of Sunday, August 6th, 60% of the U.S. corn crop had been rated good to excellent, below the 61% rated the week before, and below the 74% rating a year ago. USDA rated the amount of U.S. corn in the silk stage at 93% below the 94% on a five-year average.
- k. **Minutes:** With the cancellation of the July 12th, 2017 meeting, the June 14th, 2017 minutes were read with Motion made by Don to accept, Ron seconded., motion carried. 4-0-0.

No Comments from the Press or Public.

Comments from the Commission: Don brought it to the Board's attention that it will soon be time for the Hillsborough County 4-H Fair in New Boston. Last year (2016) the Board approved \$550.00, for

eleven (11) \$50.00-dollar gift certificates to Blue Seal for the first-place division winners. The Board is in full agreement that we continue to support our 4-H youth and future farmers. Don made the motion to approve the donation as written above, Ron seconded., motion carried 4-0-0.

Motion made to adjourn at 8:00 a.m. by Don, Ron seconded, motion carried 4-0-0.

Next Meeting Scheduled for September 13, 2017

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks
Acting Secretary

DRAFT