

## **MERRIMACK AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

### **Minutes**

**September 12, 2018**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Bob McCabe at 7:10p.m.

Present: Ron Miner III, Paul Drone, Don Miner, Bess Parks

No Comments from the Press or Public

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. **SUMMER MARKET UPDATE:** Wednesday, September 12, was the thirteenth week of the summer market. Vendor and customer attendance have remained steady. With the fall season fast approaching, the addition of winter squashes, apples, late peaches, grapes will be available, along with pumpkins, corn stalks, gourds, and plants for fall decoration. The market continues to promote vendors on its face book page. The last market will be October 10, 2018.
- b. **REVIEW OF LOCAL FARMS:** New Hampshire is seeking nominations for "Farms of Distinction". Since 1997, the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food has recognized those farms that try to keep their farmsteads neat and attractive. The Farm Distinctions program honors have been awarded to more than 145 farms to date. Winners are selected each fall by a committee and awards are presented at the NH Farm and Forest Expo in February. Anyone may place a farm in nomination, simply submit a brief description in writing of the farm and why it is recommended. Self-nominations are also welcome. Nominations received after September 1 may be considered the following year. The criteria for nomination include: 1. The farm must be a commercial farm in operation for at least five years, (forestry/tree farms are not included as they have their own program. 2. The farm must have signage. 3. The farm must be pleasing in appearance, buildings and fences in good repair a painted as appropriate. 4. Hedgerows trimmed. 5. Fields well-tended, orchards mowed. 6. Animals clean and healthy. 7. Equipment stored or parked neatly, (no junk) 8. The farm view, as seen from a public way or by public invited approach from the driveway must be attractive, (public invited through roadside signs, advertising etc.) Send to Farm of Distinction, NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets and Food, P.O. Box 2042, Concord, NH 03302-2042. Or e-mail to ([gail.mcwilliam.jellie@agr.nh.gov](mailto:gail.mcwilliam.jellie@agr.nh.gov))
- c. **ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS/4-H DONATIONS:** Eleven \$50.00 (total of \$550.00) gifts certificates were given to the first winners in each 4-H division at the Hillsboro County Fair in New Boston, September 7, 8, and 9. Don made the motion to amend the June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 minutes appropriating the \$550.00 to be paid directly to Blue Seal, 274 Elm St., Milford, NH 03055. Paul seconded, motioned carried 5-0-0. In regards to the \$500.00 appropriated for the 4-H educational fund, The NH 4-H Livestock Committee has that account therefore, Don made the motion to amend the June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 minutes to have the check for \$500 for the 4-H educational fund made out to "The NH 4-H Livestock Committee", in care of Jolee Chase, UNH Extension-Hillsborough County, 329 Mast Road, Goffstown, NH 03045. Paul seconded, with motion carried 5-0-0. Lucie Watt, Administrative Assistant at the Merrimack High School, sent Bob an e-mail on behalf of Deborah Barker, head of guidance at the high school referring to scholarships available from the agricultural commission for

students pursuing a career in an agricultural related field. She gave an overview of the high school program with a copy of the application, should the commission wish to follow that format. There are presently several students attending Alvirne High School in Hudson, NH taking an agriculture related program not offered at the Merrimack High School. The commission will discuss further at the next meeting.

- d. FARM REPORT: With bad weather predictions throughout the Eastern seaboard, farmers are having to harvest as much of their crops earlier than planned. Often with thousands of acres in production, it is a daunting task, along with moving livestock and safe guarding their families. It is always advisable to have an emergency plan in place whether a large farm or small homestead.
- e. BUG ALERT: Emerald Ash Borer, Tussock Moth Caterpillar, and the Stripped Chestnut borer continue to be a concern to foresters and homeowners. They all have the potential to destroy many of our woodland species. The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is again attacking the ash trees at an alarming rate where a quarantine on out of State firewood to reduce the probability of transport of the EAB and Asian Long Horned Beetle into the State of NH. 1. The over-all goal is to limit the transport of EAB into other parts of NH and assure trade partners in other States and Countries that the ash products they receive from NH have a low probability of being infested with EAB. 2. Continue detection efforts throughout NH. 3. Handling materials from an area with EAB in a manner that mitigates the risk associated with the product. Reference (<https://nhbugs.org>) for more information, questions and answers relating to the Emerald Ash Borer.
- f. HORSE SENSE: When a natural disaster wreaks sudden havoc, which can happen to any State, Town or Homestead, access to food stores might be foiled, not only on your farm but also in the region. If you have time to prepare, stock up with at least a week's worth of provisions for your horses. If hay is in short supply, other materials make a practical forage substitute. Cubed and/or pelleted hay are the best substitutes. Complete feeds with fiber content greater than 20% are other reasonable hay alternatives. Soaked beet pulp substituted for no more than one-third to one-half the forage stretches hay supplies. Safe drinking water is also essential, plan on needing 10-20 gallons of water per horse per day, depending on the season. You can disinfect drinking water by boiling it for a least one minute, then allowing the water to cool by adding 1/4-1/2 teaspoon of household bleach per gallon of water and allowing 30 minutes before offering to your horse; or with water purification tablets.
- g. UPCOMING WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS: See Attached
- h. TREASURER'S REPORT: As part of the preparation for the annual audit, the accounting department found 3 expenses that should have been charged to Agricultural Commission during fiscal 2017/2018. The June statement has been revised to reflect these charges and should be amended as follows: The Summer Farmer's Market Account changed from \$5,345.03 to \$5,249.05. The Community Garden Account from \$2,721.41 to \$2,664.91. The Winter Fund Account remained at \$650.00. As of July 31, 2018, the Agriculture Commission Summer Farmer's Market Fund Account is: \$5,287.39, The Community Garden Fund Account is: \$2,538.24, with combined total of \$7,825.62. The Winter Market Account is: \$483.34. The August 31, 2018 Summer Farmer's Market Account is \$5,367.38. The Community Gardner account \$2,538.24, with a combined total \$7,905.62. The Winter Farmer's Market is \$483.34.

- i. MINUTES: Both the July 11, 2018, and the August 8, 2018 minutes were read. Paul made the motion to accept the July 11, minutes, Ron seconded. motioned carried 5-0-0. Don made the motion to accept the August 8, minutes, Bob seconded, motioned carried 3-0-0 with Ron and Paul abstaining.

No Comments from the Press:

Comments from the Commission: Bob spoke of assistance moving the display sign to and from the market in the future. Also, the possibility of locating the sign in other areas town for additional public awareness of the farmer's markets a participating vendor.

Ron made the motion to adjourn at 8:01p.m., Paul seconded. motioned carried 5-0-0.

The next meeting will be held October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 7:00p.m., in the Matthew Thornton Room, East Wing.

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks  
Acting Secretary