

**MERRIMACK AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
OCTOBER 10, 2018**

Meeting called to order by Chairman, Bob McCabe at 7:02 p.m.

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

Guests: Hali Desmarais, Ashley Bergeron, Haley Geringer, and Hannah Prevost

No Comments from the Press or Public

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. **AGRICULTURAL STUDENT INTERVIEWS:** Hali Desmarais, Ashley Bergeron, Haley Geringer and Hannah Prevost approached the commission regarding scholarship monies offered by the commission to Merrimack students furthering their education in an agricultural related field upon graduation. All four students are presently enrolled in a pre-veterinary course at Alvirne High School in Hudson, NH, as the course is not offered at the Merrimack High School at this time. All four students also plan to further their education in the veterinary field, with an interest in large, small and exotic animal care.
- b. **SCHOLARSHIP/4-H DONATIONS:** After a brief discussion, the commission approved the four scholarship requests for \$500 each, to be announced at the time of graduation 2019, but not presented to the students until after one full semester in college. Ron made the motion to accept the four students' applications to receive \$500.00 each to further their education in an agricultural related field, Paul seconded, motion carried 5-0-0. The Finance Department will be notified to transfer the scholarship funds to the Merrimack Guidance Department for 2018.
- c. **AGRICULTURAL BOOKS FROM THE EXTENSION SERVICE:** Tabled until November 14, 2018 meeting.
- d. **COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE:** The Community Garden will be officially closed on October 14, 2018 for the season. Gardeners should have all their produce picked and garden plots cleaned out and ready for winter preparation. The irrigation system has been winterized and signs removed. The garden areas will be turned under and seeded with a cover crop of rye seed on October 15. Bob requested up to \$100 for the purchase of the rye seed, whereby a motion was made by Don to approve up to \$100 for the rye seed purchase, Paul seconded, motion carried 5-0-0. Bob also requested approval of up to \$50.00 for soil testing. Paul made the motion to accept the request for \$50.00 for soil testing, Don seconded, motion carried 5-0-0.
- e. **SUMMER MARKET UPDATE:** The last market day was October 10, 2018. Bob thanked the vendors for their continued support, with many to return for the 2019 market season. Bob spoke briefly about the need for additional help in moving the display board, setting up and breaking down the market at the end of the day. Also discussed was the purchased of the sign board by the commission. Don will inquire what the town will require as the Agricultural Commission is part of the town of Merrimack and would need to follow town guidelines, such as licensing and liability. Bob also mentioned the need for assistance in

taking down the market sign at Vault Storage for the winter and the need for it to be repainted. Ron offered to help with the sign removal and final plans for the repainted the sign will be determined later.

- f. **WINTER MARKET DISCUSSION:** Don would again like to hold a winter market at the John O'Leary Senior Center in Merrimack, and asked for the commission's approval. The market would open on November 7, 2018, with currently eight vendors expressing an interest in participating. Don is hoping to find an assistant to help with advertising. The sign board would be placed to attract public awareness. Where presently an electrical outlet needs to be available to operate the display sign, the need to purchase batteries in the future was discussed should the sign be placed at other locations where no electrical outlet is available. The sign would require eight batteries, at an approximate cost of \$135.00 each. More information regarding the battery purchase will be discussed at a future meeting. Regarding Don's original request to continue with the winter market, the Commission agreed to the November 7, 2018 start date, then will reassess continuation of the winter market at the January 9, 2019 meeting. Don will arrange for a meeting with the Town Manager and all Commission members before the November 7 start date to receive confirmation and discuss any other pertinent issues. Paul made the motion to allow the winter farmers' market to begin on November 7, to be reassessed at the January 9, 2019 Commission meeting, Ron seconded, motion carried 5-0-0.
- g. **FARM REPORT:** Raising the largest pumpkin to compete at New Hampshire fairs has become an obsession for many pumpkin farmers, and with stiff competition. Steve Geddes of Boscawen, New Hampshire won first place at the Deerfield Fair with his 2,528-pound pumpkin, the largest pumpkin ever recorded in United States recorded history. Not far off from the Guinness world record of a 2,624-pound pumpkin grown by a Belgium man in 2016.
- h. **BUG ALERT:** Fall's arrival marks a time of relief for gardens. Plants usually need less frequent irrigation and many pests have completed the plant-destruction phase of their life cycles. Still, a few garden pests make their presence known in fall. Brown spots on your lawn may signal that grubs are present and feasting on grass roots. Grubs feed on turf roots, adult Beetles attack many garden plants earlier in summer. It's worth trying to control grubs in the fall, because in the spring, they will continue their underground lawn destruction. In autumn, the brown Marmorated stink bugs begin their search for winter quarters and they often hope to spend the season inside your home's wall voids. If you had stink bugs last year, they left an invisible chemical alerting their smelly buddies of the way indoors. If stink bugs start showing up in your home and garden, act against them, it also helps to start sealing up insect pathways into your home.
- i. **HORSE SENSE:** Healthy feet come from daily care, have your horse trimmed every six to eight weeks by a reputable farrier. Shoe consistently during the peak riding season. Your horse's hoof shape should complement this anatomy and consider his hoof's growth pattern. A good farrier will shape the shoe to the hoof, not the other way around. If you choose for your horse to go barefoot, use hoof boots when you ride on terrain that wear on feet. If your horse goes barefoot only during the off season, hoof boots protect his hooves while giving them a rest from shoes and allowing regrowth. Correctly fit and adjust hoof boots so your horse can achieve full pastern flexion. His foot contains veins and arteries that pump blood to and from his leg. If you restrict pastern flexion, you restrict blood flow elsewhere. Do tightly secure the boots, but avoid tightening too much near the coronary band, as this shuts off blood supply to the rest of the leg. Test the boots before you get to the

trailhead to ensure that they fit well. Boots are easily sucked off by mud and a loose boot is even likelier to come off.

- j. UPCOMING WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS – See Attached.
- k. TREASURER’S REORT: As of September 30, 2018, the Agriculture Commission Farmer’s Market Fund Account is \$5,322.38. The Community Garden Fund Account is \$2,538.24 with a combined total of \$7,860.62. The Winter Farmer’s Market Fund Account is \$483.34
- l. MINUTES: The September 12, 2018 minutes were reviewed with no changes apparent. Don made the motion to accept the minutes as read, Ron seconded, motion carried 5-0-0.

No Comments from the Press or Public.

No Comment from the Commission.

Bess made the motion to adjourn at 8:28 p.m. Don seconded motion carried 5-0-0.

The next meeting will be held November 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Matthew Thornton Room, East Wing.

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks  
Acting Secretary