

**MERRIMACK AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 13, 2019**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Bob McCabe at 7:05 p.m.

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

No Comment from the Press or Public:

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **SUMMER MARKET:** Bob reports that cover letters, applications and market rules has been sent to current and potential vendors for the 2019 summer season. He is already receiving responses.
- b. **WINTER MARKET:** The question arose if the winter market was able to have enough vendors weekly to meet the rental requirements. Don reported that the market has averaged six to seven vendors weekly and anticipated an increase as the weather improves. He is confident the market will be able to meet all financial obligations. Customer traffic has been steady with an average of 30-40 regulars each week. Advertising through face book, and other social media has attracted many new customers from surrounding towns who appreciate the quality products being offered at the market.
- c. **ANNUAL REPORT:** Bob said he submitted the Commission's annual report, which should be available in April 2019.
- d. **NEW IDEAS:** Bob has reconsidered the use of a postal size card for advertising the Agricultural Commission. He has proposed the use of a tri-fold that would offer more detailed information on the markets, community gardens, and the various programs the Commission supports. Discussion continued Paul's interest in offering a container gardening seminar for those who have limited space for a garden, or just want a few containers of flowers to enjoy. The seminar would be held on a Wednesday from 3-6 during the farmers market. More details will be forthcoming, with a possible date in April or May 2019.
- e. **BUG ALERT:** Monarch Butterfly numbers are up. The world wildlife fund Mexico, in collaboration with the National commission for Protected areas and the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere reserve, recently announced the total forest area occupied by overwintering monarch colonies. Fourteen colonies were located this winter season with a total area of 6.5 hectares (15 acres), a 144 percent increase from the previous season. This is the highest level since 2006-2007. The Monarch Butterfly feeds exclusively on milkweed and is the most iconic pollinator.
- f. **WORKSHOPS:** See attached.
- g. **HORSE SENSE:** Preventing Dehydration: Susceptibility to dehydration varies from horse to horse, depending on his/her diet and exercise. Your horses water consumption may need to go up in the wintertime as horses eat more hay that requires digestion by the hindgut in a very water-intensive process. If you horse does not have enough water to digest the

roughage, he/she may develop impaction colic. Keep fresh, temperate water available always, as well as mineral salt block to stimulate thirst. Electrolytes can be given daily as well, to increase water consumption. The kidneys naturally excrete any excess electrolytes, so there is not harm in offering them year-round. The easiest way to keep track of the horse's hydration, is by testing the skins elasticity. Pinch the skin on the neck between your thumb and forefinger and pull it slightly off the body. When you release the skin, it should spring right back into place. If it does not, the horse is dehydrated, in which case you should consult your veterinarian immediately.

- h. TREASURERS REPORT: As of January 31, 2019, the Agriculture Commission Summer Farmers Market Fund Account is \$4,749.88. The Community Garden Fund Account is \$1,975.22, with a combined total of \$6,725.10. The Winter Farmers Market Fund Account is \$452.09.
- i. MINUTES: With the correction of the start of the January 9, 2019 meeting time from (7:57 pm to 6:57 pm) and including the adjourning time of (8:15) Don made the motion to accept the minutes as read. Ron seconded, motion carried 5-0-0.

No Comments from the Press or Public.

Comments from the Commission: Bob wanted to make gardeners aware of the March 30, 2019 Pruning Demonstration being held at John Lastowka's Maple Gate Farm on Amherst Rd. in Merrimack. The demonstration will start promptly at 9:00 am until 3:00 pm, and will cover, apples, pears, sour cherries, peaches, highbush blueberries, and grapevines. Refreshments will be served and a donation of \$5.00 will be appreciated by the UNHCE.

Also, the 2019 N.H. State Nursery catalog is now available. Varieties include, Fir, pine, spruce, black walnut, maple, and oak. Conservation shrub seedlings and more are also available. In addition to providing sales through its catalog, the nursery is open for walk in sales generally from mid-April to mid-May, or until stock runs out. Thousands of seedlings are given away free of charge as described in RSA 227-H-2 to qualified recipients for educational purposes; including schools, scout groups, local governments and other State agencies. To download a catalog visit (nhnursery.com) or for more information (nhdffl.org).

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Don made the motion to adjourn at 7:50 pm, Ron seconded, motion carried 5-0-0.

The next meeting will be held on March 13, 2019 at 7:00pm, in the Matthew Thornton Room, East Wing.

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks
Acting Secretary