

MERRIMACK AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
June 12, 2019

Meeting called order by Chairman Bob McCabe at 7:32 pm

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

No Comments from the Press or Public

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **SUMMER MARKET:** Fourteen vendors participated at the Summer Farmer's Market opening day on June 12, 2019. Along with the many returning vendors offering baked goods, early varieties of fresh produce, honey, maple and soap products; the market welcomes several new vendors offering tea, wine, fresh fish, and custom embroidery items and service. The Summer Market is held every Wed from 3-6pm at Vault Storage, Daniel Webster Highway North, in Merrimack, throughout the market season. For more information regarding the market or becoming a vendor, contact Bob at (merrimackfarmersmarket@gmail.com). Advertising was discussed, with Don suggesting pictures of the market or produce be included with the text on face book. Visually seeing what is available at the market creates more interest than text alone.
- b. **WINTER MARKET:** Don reported the last winter market June 5, 2019 was cancelled, as there were not enough vendors available to open. With the cost of renting the John O'Leary Senior Center, vendor availability, and weather conditions cancelling market days; the winter market has not always been able to meet the financial obligations on a month to month basis as expected. Should the winter market continue for another season will depend on finding a less expensive, preferably free accommodations, with good visibility and adequate parking.
- c. **COMMUNITY GARDEN:** Sixty-six plots have been sold, with many gardeners purchasing multiple plots to expand their gardening talents. While most all have been planted with fences up, some have not. Bob will get in touch with the renters of the vacant plots as they will need to be weeded to maintain the area in good order. The water has been turned on for irrigation. There are still plots available, as there is still time to plant. Contact Bob at (merrimackgardens@gmail.com).
- d. **BUG ALERT:** Ash borers have become visible. Also called jewel beetles, they were discovered in Detroit in 2002, and believed to have entered the country on wooden packing from cargo ships and planes. Native to North Eastern Asia, they feed on Ash species. Females lay egg in bark crevices, then the larvae feed underneath the bark to emerge as adults in one to two years. Products containing Carbaryl and Acephate can be used as a spray treatment, injecting the insecticide directly into the sap flow inside the bark killing the beetles as they feed. Ticks continue to be a problem, use cautionary measures to prevent Lyme disease. Wood chucks and rabbits are also a nuisance to gardeners.
- e. **WORKSHOPS:** See Attached.

- f. **HORSE SENSE: Disaster Preparedness, Barn Fires:** Barn fires are the leading disaster for horse owners. The key is prevention and can save your horses life. 1. Prohibit smoking in or around the barn. 2. Do not park motor vehicles or any flammable materials in or near the barn. 3. Inspect electrical for faulty wiring. 4. Keep appliances to a minimum. 5. Be sure hay is dry before storing. Moist hay may heat and cause spontaneous combustion. Store in separate barn if possible. 6. Keep aisles, stall and barn doors free of debris and equipment. 7. Mount fire extinguishers around the stable, especially at all entrances. 8. Have a planned evacuation route for every stall and familiarize family or employees with your plans. 9. Post emergency telephone numbers at each telephone, and keep barns address clearly posted for emergency responders to locate you. 10. Smoke alarms and heat detectors might be a consideration. 11. If possible, host an open house for emergency personnel. Provide them with tips on horse handling. 12. Familiarize your horses with emergency procedures and common activities they would encounter during a disaster. Try to desensitize them to flashlights and flashing lights. In the event of a barn fire, call 911. 1. Don't enter the barn if already engulfed in flames. 2. If safe to enter the barn, evacuate one horse at a time. Be sure to put a halter and lead on before opening the stall door, be aware that horses tend to run back into burning barns out of fear and confusion. 3. Blindfold horses only if necessary. Many horses will balk at a blindfold, making evacuation more difficult and time consuming. 4. Move horse to paddocks close enough to reach quickly, but far enough from the barn. Never let horses loose in an area where they're able to return to the barn. 5. After the fire be sure to have a veterinarian check all the horses. Smoke inhalation can cause serious lung damage and respiratory complications. Horses are prone to stress and may colic after a fire. For more information about disaster preparedness, write to Emergency Services, The Humane Society of the United States, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037 or (humanesociety.org/emergency).
- g. **TREASURERS' REPORT:** As of May 31, 2019, the Agricultural Commission Farmers Market Fund Account is \$5,129.10. The Community Garden Fund Account is \$2,217.33, with a combined total of \$7,346.43. The Winter Farmers Market Fund Account is \$615.83.
- h. **MINUTES:** The May 8, 2019 minutes were read with Paul making the motion to accept, Bess seconded, motion carried 3-0-0.

No Comments from the Press or Public

Comments from the Commission: Bob received an e-mail from Loretta Jackson to inform Bob that she has recently been released from the Ogden Newspapers, and now a free-range reporter. Most recently, Loretta submitted a cover story about the Merrimack Farmer's Market in the Merrimack Journal giving the market good publicity and public awareness. Publication has been ensured through her continuing welcome by the editors of the Journals, which include Merrimack, Bedford, Hollis and Brookline. As a free-range reporter, she is available for hire at a \$90,000 nonprofit, which includes an interview, pre-approved story before submission and photos. Loretta inquired if the Commission would consider payment for the recent published article and would be available for future advertising per the Commission's request. Paul brought the motion to the floor to forward payment of \$90.00 to Loretta Jackson for the market advertising as presented in the Merrimack Journal. Ron seconded; motion carried 5-0-0. Bob also received a note from Jolee Chase, 4-H manager that the check for \$350.00 for "Pickle Project" had been received. Where the \$500.00 for the 4-H educational fund had not been appropriated for 2019, Don made the motion to approve the \$ 500.00 for the 4-H educational fund, Ron seconded, motion carried 5-0-0.

Paul brought to the boards attention the need to create a policy and procedure manual for the farmers markets and community garden. Having a manual that outlines the duties of each activity would enable any board member to assist the project manager or take charge as needed. The Board will discuss in more detail at the next meeting July 10, 2019.

Motion to Adjourn: Paul made the motion to adjourn at 8:12 pm, Don seconded, motioned carried 5-0-0.

The next meeting will be held July 10, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in the Matthew Thornton Room, East Wing.

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks
Acting Secretary