

**MERRIMACK AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
OCTOBER 9, 2019**

Meeting brought to order by Chairman Bob McCabe at 7:02 pm

Present: Paul Drone, Ron Miner III, Bess Parks

Absent: Don Miner

Guest: Daniel Koontz

Comments from the Press or Public

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **SUMMER FARMERS MARKET:** Wednesday, October 9, was the last market day for the 2019 season. Many regular customers stopped by to shop and expressed their appreciation for the market and looking forward to the spring opening in June of 2020. The Commission would like to thank Vault Storage owner Charles Morgan for his continue support in allowing the farmers market to be held at his parking lot at 526 Daniel Webster Highway North in Merrimack.
- b. **COMMUNITY GARDEN:** The garden will be officially closed October 13, 2019. On October 14, Bob will mow, rototill and spread a green crop of rye. The irrigation system will also be drained at this time. Gardeners have been notified to have their garden plots cleared by the October 13 date.
- c. **AGRICULTURE SIGN AT THE TRANSFER STATION:** The sign at the transfer station has deteriorated beyond repair. The board agrees that a new sign be made and have commissioned Karen Swenson to undertake this project. In adieu of payment, the board has agreed to waive the farmers market annual vendor fee of \$125.00 for two market seasons 2020 and 2021, totaling \$250.00 in payment to Karen for the new sign. The appropriate size plywood is available, having been purchase previously, leaving only the purchase of paints and other necessary materials to complete the project. Bob has asked the board to appropriate \$ 125.00 to purchase those supplies. Paul made the motion to accept the terms of payment to Karen Swenson, to create a new agriculture sign for placement at the Merrimack transfer station by waiving the vendor fee of \$ 125.00 for two farmer market seasons of 2020/2021 totaling \$ 250.00. Ron seconded; motion carried 4-0-0. Paul also made the motion to approve \$125.00 for the purchase of painting supplies for the agriculture sign project. Ron seconded; motion carried 4-0-0.
- d. **BUG ALERT:** Ticks and mosquitos continue to pose a threat for Lyme disease and Triple E. Precautionary measures are still advised.

- e. WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS: See Attached.
- f. HORSE SENSE: Changing with the Season, Fall Horse Health Care Checklist. Fall brings its own set of health care and management challenges, but these tips can help you head off any potential problems. 1. Parasite control: Speak with your vet about whether you should be making any adjustments to your deworming schedule. 2. Changing Pasture Conditions: As grass supplies dwindle, horses will often sample greenery they would normally leave alone. This can lead to plant poisonings. Begin to offer supplemental hay well in advance of the pasture going bare. 3. Adjusting Feed/Exercise Ratios: Adjust feeding according to your riding or competing schedule to avoid your horse becoming overweight. 4. Routine Physical Maintenance: Have teeth floated and sheath cleaned. Consider giving a shod horse a break from shoes, giving the hooves time to toughen up before ground conditions get to hard. 5. Preventing Acorn over-indulgence. Although many horses relish acorns, overindulgence can cause toxicity. Symptoms of toxicity may include loss of appetite, abdominal pain/colic, diarrhea or laminitis. 6. Fall Laminitis: Insulin-resistant horses, or older horses that may have early Cushing's disease, are at high risk for laminitis in the fall. Research has found that there is a seasonal elevation of the hormone ACTH in all horses during the fall. This begins mid-to-late August and continues into November. For normal horses, it's not a problem, but with insulin resistant horse or those with early Cushing's the rise in ACTH can be substantially greater and the increase in cortisol this produces puts them at high risk for laminitis. 7. Weaning Preparation. Weaning age and the age your baby should receive this first vaccinations, or last foal booster are often the same. Weaning is very stressful for a foal, so you want to make sure you have vaccinations out of the way at least two weeks before weaning to make sure that stress doesn't interfere with good response to the vaccines. 8. Pregnant Mares. Nutritional needs change dramatically the last half to one-third of gestation, calorie requirements go up, but mineral requirements rise even more. This means that you can't meet the mineral needs without risking getting the mare overweight unless you change how you are feeding and supplementing. Your vet or a nutrition professional are the best sources for advice on how to bring your mare's diet up to requirements. Many developmental bone and joint problems get their start long before the foal is born. 9. Miscellaneous /chores: Now is the time to inspect your property and buildings with winter conditions in mind. Take care of repairs you might have let go when summer riding was in full swing. Fix anything that looks like it could become a problem in the next few months, better to do it now than be faced with a problem you can't avoid any longer in freezing weather.
- g. TREASURER'S REPORT: The Agricultural Commission Farmer's Market Fund Account is \$ 5,109.93. The Community Garden Fund Account is \$ 1,977.57, with a combined total of \$ 7,087.50. The Winter Farmer's Market Account is \$ 165.42.
- h. MINUTES: With the correction of (is) in place of (in) in the sentence beginning with (The course cost) in Comments from the Commission, Ron made the motion to accept the minutes as read. Paul seconded; motion carried 4-0-0.

No Comments from the Press or Public:

Comments from the Commission: Bob and board members welcomed Daniel Koontz who may be interested in becoming a board member. Daniel is a Merrimack resident and new vendor at the summer farmer's market selling his artisan breads. Bob mentioned he will start updating contracts for both the Farmer's Market and Community Gardens.

Motion to Adjourn: Paul made the motion to adjourn at 7:37 pm, Ron seconded, motion carried 4-0-0.

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

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks
Acting Secretary