

**MERRIMACK AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
APRIL 14, 2021**

Meeting called order by Chairman Bob McCabe at 7:02pm

Present: Paul Drone, Ron Miner III, Bess Parks

Guest: Bill Hines

Comments from the Press or Public.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. **FARMERS MARKET:** The summer farmers market will open June 9, 2021 provided a secured number of vendors will be participating. The final decision will be made by the next scheduled meeting May 12, 2021.
- b. **COMMUNITY GARDEN:** Thirty-eight garden plots have been rented to date. Many 10 x 10 plots still available at \$ 10.00 for Merrimack residents or \$ 15.00 for out-of-town residents. Bob has harrowed the garden with plots staked and flagged for a potential opening of May 9, 2021 weather permitting. Garden information from the Commission, along with various bulletins from the Cooperative Extension Service will be posted on the bulletin board. Guest speaker and Master Gardener Bill Hines spoke briefly on plants suitable to plant during springs cooler temperatures. Peas, onion sets, and lettuce will germinate at 35 degrees F., with many root crops and leafy greens at 40 degrees F. With our area in Zone 5, weather conditions do vary. Tender crops should be planted closer to the end of May when there is less likely to have a killing frost. For more community garden information, contact Bob at (bobmccabe254@gmail.com)
- c. **SCHOLARSHIP DISCUSSION:** Discussion regarding the Commission's yearly donations to 4-H and Blue Seal. Currently the Commission gives \$500.00 dollars towards the 4-H educational fund for those members advancing to the National Conference level, and \$550.00 dollars for eleven \$50.00 dollar gift certificates to Blue Seal for the first-place winners in their divisions at the New Boston Fair in New Boston, NH. Jolie Chase, UNH educator responded to the Commission's recent request regarding additional funding needed for 4-H projects for 2021. She indicated that funding was needed for the Sheep/Goat educational day/ weekend, and for the development of three science kit projects. One for animal science, a plant science one with bees and bugs and one that is science. Funding would provide those youths who would be unable to afford the cost of the kits to participate. Paul made the motion to approve \$ 2,050.00. \$500.00 dollars for the 4-H educational fund, \$550.00 dollars for the eleven \$50.00 gift certificates for first place winners at the 2021 agricultural fair in New Boston, NH, with \$1,000.00 dollars specifically earmarked for the Sheep/Goat

educational day/weekend, and Science Kit Projects. Jolee Chase to administer the funds for each project at her discretion. Ron seconded; motion carried 4-O-O.

- d. NH FARM BUREAU ANNUAL RENEWAL: Bob received the renewal notice from NH Farm Bureau. The decision to renew will be discussed at a later date.
- e. HORSE SENSE: Spring Checklist: 1. Monitor blanketing needs as daytime temperatures fluctuate. Check for horse's skin as they shed for any blemishes or abnormalities not noticed over the winter months. 2. Schedule a farrier visit. Your horse should have a solid and sturdy hoof as they enter the spring season. 3. Schedule spring vaccines. Core vaccines include Eastern/Western Encephalomyelitis, Rabies, Tetanus and West Nile Virus. Additional risk-based vaccines will be administered if determined necessary by your vet due to your horse's age, geographic location and travel schedule. These include Equine Herpesvirus, Equine Influenza, Potomac Horse Fever and Strangles to name a few. Update Coggins and other health forms for off farm travel. 4. Check for Parasites. Fecal samples are commonly collected at time of spring vaccines with your veterinarian or can be submitted prior to your appointment after the first frost. This will determine the need for worming, and also decreases drug resistance to deworming drugs when prescribed. 5. Schedule Dental. Preventive oral health will improve your horse's overall health. Proper teeth floating will also ensure your horse is able to fully and efficiently utilize the energy from their diet. 6. Feeding Schedule. Time to reexamine your horse's feed needs, depending on body condition, increased work and current metabolic/health concerns. Any change of diet should be done gradually, over 7-10 days, slowly blending feeds to allow your horse to adjust to the new regimen. 7. Monitor grazing time. Grass contains much less fiber than hay, so it's wise to continue to offer hay for the 1st few weeks of grazing to aid in this transition. Overweight, horses are at increased risk of laminitis due to the natural sugars in rapidly growing grass. 8. Check Pastures. Walk the perimeter of your property/pastures to ensure secure and sturdy boundaries. 9. Evaluate tack and equipment. Time to dust off/clean/repair or replace tack or equipment before using. Clean and store winter blankets for the fall.
- f. BUG ALERT: Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) is an invasive insect that has spread throughout Pennsylvania and as near to New England as Connecticut, with increasing concern in all States. Spotted lanternfly feeds on the plant sap of many economically important plants, including grapevines, maple trees, black walnut, birch, willow and other trees. The feeding damage significantly stresses the plants which can lead to decreased health and potentially death. As (SLF) feeds, the insect excretes honeydew (a sugary substance) which can attract bees, wasps, and other insects. The honeydew also builds up and promotes the growth for sooty mold (fungi) which can cover the plants, forest understories, patio furniture, cars and anything else found below (SLF) feeding. The spotted Lanternfly is quite visible with black spotted tan upper wings, and bright red with black and white striped lower. Residents should also be aware that ticks are active and to use necessary precautions.

Approved: May 12, 2021

- g. TREASURERS' REPORT: Balances as of March 21, 2021 for the Farmer's Market Fund Account is \$3,853.12. The Community Garden Fund Account is \$889.60, with a combined total of \$4,742.83.
- h. MINUTES: Paul made the motion to accept the minutes as written, Bess seconded, motion carried 3-0-0.

No Comments from the Press or Public:

Comments from the Commission: Bob reminded gardeners to start organizing their garden plans. Have seed selection made or seedlings started. Tools in good order to have a good garden experience.

Motion to Adjourn: Bess made the motion to adjourn at 7:50 pm, Paul seconded, motion carried 4-0-0.

The next meeting of the Agricultural Commission will be held May 12, 2021 at 7:00 pm in the Matthew Thornton Room, East Wing.

Respectfully Submitted

Bess-Arden Parks
Acting Secretary