

Meeting Minutes: 04/17/2023 **FINAL**

Present: Audrey Prior (Chair), Joan Ganotis (Vice Chair), Pollyanna Ford (alternate), Cheryl Kasztejna (alternate), Rowan Perkins (alternate)

Absent: Dieter Ebert, Hank Brandt, Phil Thayer

1. Opened meeting at 7:07 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes:

Motion: To approve the minutes from 02/20/2023 as written.

1st: J. Ganotis

2nd: P. Ford

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion: To approve the minutes from 03/20/2023 as amended.

1st: P. Ford

2nd: J. Ganotis

Motion passed unanimously.

3. Old Business

3a. Membership: P. Thayer expressed willingness to continue as a regular member on the Agricultural Commission.

Motion: To recommend the following reappointment to the Select Board:

Phil Thayer, Member, 3-year term

1st: J. Ganotis

2nd: P. Ford

Motion passed unanimously.

3b. Newsletter articles/"Interview with a Farmer" project: P. Ford provided a draft article for review. The goal of the article was to share a story about farming and try to create a connection to and appreciation for agriculture with readers. A series of articles could be done like this. J. Ganotis provided some suggested revisions, which P. Ford will incorporate and provide a new draft for review at the May meeting of the Agricultural Commission. The newsletter article is typically due in late May, which would be after the Agricultural Commission's next meeting.

3c. Community Garden: The commission recapped the previous meeting, which was held at the garden. Almost all of the plots have been filled, and A. Prior is working through the waitlist to fill the rest. The water has been turned on at the garden and the commission thanks the Department of Public Works for delivering wood chips and compost that the gardeners can use. A gardener notified A. Prior that it seems that bees are occupying one of the honeybee hives that have been empty for the last few years. A. Prior reached out to Lisa Cote, whose husband owns the hives. The gardeners contacted A. Prior about the rototiller and said that it looks like the town may have taken a look as there were some parts next to it, and asked if it could be fixed. P. Ford said that she could take a look at it and see if she's able to fix it. The Conservation Commission did give permission for the trees along the bottom of the garden to be removed. P. Thayer offered to chainsaw them, but someone else would need to deal with removal. P. Ford said she'd take a look at them when she went to pick up the rototiller to see if she could cut and remove them. One of the new gardeners asked if he could put a small shed on his plot to store his tools and other personal property. Commission members discussed it and didn't feel it was appropriate to have sheds on individual plots. Commission members will continue to consider how to address the fencing, uneven plot sizes, and aisle ways. All commission members agreed that choosing a clean up day

in the fall is a good idea, and requiring personal property to be removed from the garden for the winter will also help with the appearance.

3d. Goals for 2023: Will discuss at next meeting.

4. New Business

4a. Request for letter of support for RSA 79-D tax relief application: J. Ganotis received a request from Patricia Meyers for a letter of support to accompany her application for tax relief under RSA 79-D. This application is made first to the Heritage Commission and then to the Select Board for a decision. RSA 79-D authorizes towns to grant property tax relief to property owners with historic barns in exchange for a discretionary preservation easement granted to the town that lasts a minimum of 10 years. During the term of this easement the property owner must maintain the barn. The tax relief is intended to help barn owners preserve their barns and perform necessary maintenance and improvements to the structure without said improvements increasing the assessed value and therefore their property taxes. There are several criteria that must be met in order to receive this tax relief.

Motion: To authorize J. Ganotis to submit a letter of support for Patricia Meyers' RSA 79-D tax relief application to the Heritage Commission on behalf of the Agricultural Commission.

1st: A. Prior

2nd: R. Perkins

Motion passed unanimously.

4b. Land Use Boards Annual Meeting: The annual Land Use Boards meeting will be held on June 22 or June 27, both of which are Thursdays, depending on availability of participants. A. Prior will attend, and P. Ford volunteered to attend as the second representative from the Agricultural Commission. A. Prior will notify everyone once the final date has been announced. Commission members should start thinking about topics to be brought up at the meeting. Usually the Community Garden is one topic, and the commission is allowed to have two to three items on the agenda to share with the other boards.

5. Adjournment:

Motion: Adjourn at 8:30pm.

1st: P. Ford

2nd: J. Ganotis

Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Audrey Prior. Next meeting: May 15, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the North Hampton Town Clerk's Office, 237 Atlantic Ave, North Hampton, NH 03862.