

Present: Audrey Prior (Chair), Joan Ganotis (Vice Chair), Phil Thayer, Lisa Cote (alternate), Cindy Jenkins (alternate), Walter Nordstrom (alternate), Pollyanna Ford (member of the public), Allyson Ryder (member of the public). **Absent:** Hank Brandt, Dieter Ebert, Bobbi Burns (non-member, secretary)

1. Opened meeting at 6:02 p.m.

4b. Site walk of North Hampton Community Garden: Commission members agreed to start the meeting with a site walk of the North Hampton Community Garden given that the daylight would lessen as the meeting went on. The purpose of this visit was to check the dimensions of the garden plots, look at the compost area and paths between the gardens, and look at any other issues raised. Being at the garden provided better context for discussions. It was determined that there is quite a bit of variation in the dimensions of the plots. The paths between the gardens are similarly irregular in width, which is what has created challenges with mowing. Seeing the paths, it is clear that there are several that are too narrow for large mowing equipment to pass through, such as that which the town uses.

Commission members noted that part of the metal fencing surrounding the entire lot was broken, which constituted a safety concern. A. Prior will reach out to NH DOT about getting that fixed. It was also noted that some of the trees adjacent to the garden, along Rt. 111/Exeter Road have grown up to the power lines and are touching the wires. A. Prior will reach out to Eversource about having these branches trimmed.

A. Ryder notified the commission that the lawn mower at the garden needs repairs. There are also leaking water spigots that will need to be addressed so as not to waste water.

2. Approval of Minutes:

Motion: To approve the minutes from 3/15/2021 as written.

1st: J. Ganotis

2nd: P. Thayer

Motion passed unanimously

3. Old Business

3a. Membership: C. Jenkins term as an alternate on the Agricultural Commission expires in 2021. C. Jenkins stated that she was willing to serve on the commission until someone new expressed interest. P. Ford had reached out to a member of the Agricultural Commission several months ago about her interest in the commission's activities. P. Ford has lived in North Hampton for many years and operates a farm in town, raising livestock and growing produce and hay. She shared her interest in furthering the educational mission of the Agricultural Commission and helping the general public to understand the vital role of agriculture and the role each person can play in producing food. After some discussion, it was decided that P. Ford would take over the alternate position. C. Jenkins expressed interest in remaining an active participant by attending Agricultural Commission meetings as a member of the public. P. Ford was asked to provide a resume or letter of interest that could be submitted to the Select Board for her appointment.

Motion: To appoint Pollyanna Ford as an Alternate to the Agricultural Commission for a 1-year term.

1st: L. Cote

2nd: J. Ganotis

Motion passed unanimously

3b. Community Garden: Commission members continued the discussion started during the site walk. Regarding the uneven plot dimensions, it was suggested that the commission may want to consider a different way of pricing the plots so that the cost is more equitable, perhaps by pricing per square foot instead of a standard plot fee. This discussion will be continued in the fall/winter. One gardener had reached out last fall about her garden specifically, as she measured and the dimensions were less than what they should be. After looking at this garden and the paths around it, it was determined that this garden is not expandable, as it would make the pathways too narrow.

Mowing has been an issue of discussion since last year. In past meeting Agricultural Commission members determined that the mowing of interior rows had worked okay when the gardeners handled this issue internally using the lawn mower to do the mowing themselves. The commission determined that this same approach would work this year, and if it continued to be a problem once this growing season got going, and the mowing could not be handled by the gardeners, then the commission would consider other options. Commission members decided that before getting the push mower fixed, it must first be determined who actually owns the mower. It was unclear to commission members whether the mower had been formally donated, or if it is something that one of the gardeners still owns but leaves at the garden for all to use. C. Jenkins suggested reaching out to one of the gardeners who she recalls having been the one to bring the mower to the garden. A. Prior will follow up. The commission also decided to reach out to the North Hampton Department of Public Works to see if they have any old mowers that could be dropped off at the garden and left for the gardeners use, such as a hand me down push mower left over from when the department upgraded their machinery. A. Prior will follow up on this as well. A. Prior will also follow up with the Dept. of Public Works about looking into and fixing the leaking faucets.

A. Prior sent out waivers to all of the gardeners last month and many have already been sent in with payment. All plots that came available have been filled. A. Prior will be sending reminders to gardeners who have not yet paid before the next meeting. When speaking with the town regarding payments received, it was brought to A. Prior's attention that A. Ryder has been paying for a full plot but has only been leasing a half plot. In order to rectify this overpayment A. Prior suggested waiving A. Ryder's fee for this year only. The town did confirm that the Agricultural Commission has the authority to do so.

Motion: To waive A. Ryder's garden plot fee for the year 2021 in order to remedy overpayment in years past.

1st: J. Ganotis

2nd: L. Cote

Motion passed unanimously

3c. Master plan goals – Edible landscaping at the North Hampton Public Library: The NHPL Landscape Advisory Committee met once as a full group in early April. This meeting served to provide an overview of the NHPL's priorities and goals for landscaping, as well as to go over the budget and what has already been contracted for. The current budget can only accommodate basic landscaping (Eight trees, grass seed, hardscape, grading, and perhaps an irrigation system). The NHPL is also looking into fencing and shrubbery to provide privacy for residential homes located near the new parking lot. Once the budget for interior furniture has been set, the library trustees will have a better idea of whether there are funds left in this year's budget for any other landscaping projects.

Agricultural Commission members reiterated that fundraising could be done for landscaping projects, such as plantings in memoriam. Edible landscaping should be selected to provide educational opportunities as well. For example, an apple tree planted at the new library could be used to teach pruning techniques. Elevated garden beds were also suggested as another opportunity both to educate about gardening and add an interactive element to the landscape design.

4. New Business

4a. Land Use Boards Meeting: The annual land use boards meeting will be held June 24th at 6:00pm. It has not yet been decided whether this meeting will be in person, via Zoom, or a combination. A. Prior and D. Ebert will attend. The Agricultural Commission will need to decide on the 2-3 topics that it would like to discuss at its next meeting so that they can be placed on the agenda for the land use boards meeting.

Adjournment

Motion: Adjourn at 7:25 p.m.

1st: A. Prior

2nd: J. Ganotis

Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Audrey Prior. Next Meeting date & time: May 17, 2021; 7:00 p.m.; North Hampton Town Clerk's Office