

**TOWN OF PELHAM  
PELHAM AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION  
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES AUGUST 3, 2023**

The Meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. at the Pelham Police Conference Room

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Jenny Larson  
Danielle Masse Quinn  
Laura Spottiswood  
Steve Doherty  
Michelle Cooke  
James Fisher  
Charlene Takesian, Selectmen's Representative

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Kevin Cote, Board of Selectmen  
John Spottiswood, Pelham Farmers Market  
Rhonda Whittier and Robert Long with the Transfer Station/Highway Department

**PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

Beth Jusaume of 15 Hinds Lane, Pelham NH  
Kevin Bond of 20 Old County Road, Pelham NH  
Gerard Hubert of 48 Moonshadow Drive, Pelham NH

**MINUTES**

Meeting Minutes for July 6, 2023 **APPROVED** Doherty/Spottiswood  
Site Walk Meeting Minutes for August 1, 2023 – tabled to next meeting

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

**OPEN FORUM**

Mr. Kevin Bond of 20 Old County Road offered discussion on the proposed Community Garden.

Mr. Bond discussed that Old County Road would not be a good location for a community garden.

Mr. Bond discussed his concerns as follows:

- Old County Road does not have a water source;
- There is a 15 foot stream and wetlands on the property

- There is no parking at this location;
- There is no place for people to turn around; the turn is not big enough/90 feet;
- Old County Road is a small established residential neighborhood;
- He wanted to have the AG Commission take a look at the tax map to see where the road ends and supplied a map to the members;
- He does not recommend having a community garden at this location

Ms. Masse Quinn was also in favor of not having the community garden at the Old County Road location.

Mr. John Spottiswood offered discussion on Old County Road with concern to the parking spots being only two (2) and it is challenging to turn around in the location.

Ms. Larson thanked Mr. Bond for his input and time as well as thanked him for attending the meeting.

Mr. James Fisher offered discussion on Old County Road as he is familiar with that location. He believes the land is not suitable for a community garden and its not feasible. It will not grow vegetables and such simply because the way the sun rises and the sun sets.

Ms. Larson asked if there were any other members of the public in attendance that would like to speak in favor and or in opposition of a community garden.

Ms. Beth Jusaume of 15 Hinds Lane offered discussion that she was in favor of a community garden and is new to the area. She discussed two (2) locations she felt would be a good spot for a community garden:

1. The Pelham Library; and
2. Veterans Memorial Park

Ms. Beth Jusaume discussed the importance of visibility and safety.

Mr. Kevin Cote offered discussion on the land near the Pelham Library and working with the New England Pentecostal Church's new youth program for a community garden on their land

Ms. Laura Spottiswood offered discussion that the land near the Pelham Library could be a good spot for a community garden

Ms. Beth Jusaume offered her opposition on having a garden in an area with abutters and "a lot" of parking needs to be available to the gardeners.

Mr. John Spottiswood offered discussion in favor of having a community garden on conservation lands that are bought by the Town for the people contribute in the efforts to purchasing these lands and the people want access to the Town lands and have been requested this within the new 2023 Pelham Master Plan.

Mr. John Spottiswood also continued discussion in favor of the seniors/aging residents in our Town should be able to use/enjoy and have access to these agricultural programs and if abutters live next to a conservation land they are aware that these lands will be used for the benefit of the community.

Mr. John Spottiswood also offered discussion in favor of those who are handicapped in our Town. The handicapped should be able to go down Moonshadow Drive and enjoy their time gardening, at a picnic table and enjoying the lands bought by the Town. He believed the process needs to be more community orientated and a community garden can start on a smaller scale.

Mr. John Spottiswood and Ms. Masse Quinn offered discussion on the new 2023 Master Plan as they are both members of the Pelham Master Plan Subcommittee. The discussion was as follows:

- According to the 2023 Master Plan Existing Conditions Feedback, it was requested by the residents that the Hobbs Center Aging Adults have more access and more recreation activities within the Town;
- It was requested that the lands bought by the Town be used for recreational purposes; park, splash pad park and community activities for all age groups;
- A majority of the feedback still wants to keep the Town of Pelham rural

All Agricultural members were in favor of proposing a community garden on a smaller scale and should benefit the aging adults as well as the needs for the public school system and for the homeschooling families within our community.

Ms Masse Quinn offered discussion in agreement with Mr. Spottiswood that if the land is bought by the Town, such as Conservation lands, then those lands should be able to be used for the benefit of all who live in the Town.

Ms. Masse Quinn offered discussion in reference to Merriam Farm being the best location for a community garden because the land has a total of 16 acres of existing Agricultural land.

Ms. Larson offered discussion on waving fee's for all Veterans and all aging persons over the age of 55.

Ms. Laura Spottiswood offered discussion in reference to needing a location first for without a location we do not have the logistics in place and this is conceptual only.

Ms. Beth Jusaume Of 15 Hinds Lane offered discussion in reference to creating a questionnaire and or survey for different ages

Mr. Kevin Cote offered discussion to look into using survey monkey for a survey and believed the Forestry Commission should remain involved because they have the authority to approve the use of certain Town land.

Ms. Charlene Takesian offered discussion in agreement with Mr. Spottiswood that land bought by the Town should be able to be enjoyed by all residents of the town through a community garden and or any recreational activity seen fit.

Ms. Charlene Takesian then continued discussion to research other towns rules and regulations with a community garden and model those examples.

Ms. Larson asked if there was anyone else who would like to comment on the community garden No one else came forward. Ms. Larson closed Open Forum.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

Ms. Rhonda Whittier and Robert Long with the Highway Department presented a proposed Composting Program and a video presentation.

The proposed Composting Program would be stationed at the Pelham Transfer Station.

The Composting Program would:

- Start out with small tubs;
- Two (2) 64 gallon tub's picked up weekly;
- Would benefit to take out of the MSW and not go into landfill;
- Would benefit residents who can come grab compost at the Transfer Station for their yards and such;
- The Compost System would be set up by the brush at the Transfer Station

Ms. Rhonda Whittier and Robert Long presented a video from Vanguard Renewables and a packet titled Town of Pelham Proposal.

Ms. Rhonda Whittier and Robert Long offered discussion that Vanguard Renewables also generate/ makes their own electricity

Ms. Larson offered discussion in reference to the hauling out of item and what happens if it is not hauled out

Ms. Rhonda Whittier discussed that if the item is not hauled out it would then have to go through NH DES for overview, have to hire someone to turn the bins, and like the Town of Hollis members can attend their facility

Ms. Takesian offered discussion to start with something small and see how it is received by the community.

Ms. Michelle Cooke offered discussion to include buckets/bins for the school system starting with the Pelham Elementary School. She has been in contact with the Food Service Department

Mr. James Fisher offered discussion on how do they recycle the aluminum cans

Ms. Rhonda Whittier offered discussion that the cans are separated and come out of the towns MS4W

**MOTION:** The Pelham Agricultural Commission is in favor of supporting the proposed Compost Program **COOKE/DOHERTY**

Ms. Charlene Takesian offered discussion to have the Pelham Agricultural Commission and Transfer Station/Highway Department present the proposed Compost Program to the Board of Selectmen

## **DISCUSSIONS:**

### **PELHAM COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Ms. Larson offered discussion and asked the members to engage in discussion about any and all possible locations for the Pelham Community Garden. Locations are as follows:

#### **Sherburne Road/Chestnut Lane Site Walk Location**

Ms. Charlene Takesian offered discussion that although she was not able to attend the site walk on the above location, she did go over and check it out. She had concerns for safety, safety for the residents where the lot is secluded and for the elderly to be able to access the property. She was not in favor of having a community garden at this location

Ms. Larson offered discussion that she would not be in favor of having a community garden at this location. She did attend the site walk. She believes the land is not good land for a garden with the invasive plants, rocky land, lack of water and also shares the concern for safety. She believes it is a journey to get to the location and is concerned that the handicapped and or elderly residents would not be able to access this location.

Ms. Masse Quinn offered discussion that she would not be in favor of this location. She did attend the site walk. She believes the walk to the location is more of a trail walk than a short walk to attend to community garden. She also believes the land is not suitable for a garden also noticing the invasive plants, poison ivy and rugged soil. She also shares a concern for the safety of the public/handicapped and elderly. She also has a concern for the lack of water that's needed for a garden and reminded the commission members that the Pelham Planning Board does have an active Moratorium in place for residents in that area who are currently living with little to no water. She also has a concern for the traffic on Sherburne Road.

Mr. James Fisher offered discussion that he would not be in favor of having a community garden at this location. He did attend the site walk. He believes the top soils are not good and are rocky with boulders. He also agrees that there are a lot of invasive plants on the land and the location is secluded which could pose a safety concern for the public.

Ms. Michelle Cooke offered her discussion that she would not be in favor of having a community garden at this location. She did attend the site walk. She also shares the same concerns for safety, land or lack of land quality.

Ms. Larson asked all the members for a consensus to rule out the Sherburne Road/Chestnut Lane location for a Community Garden. All members were in agreement.

Ms. Laura Spottiswood offered discussion in reference to creating a Pelham Community Garden Subcommittee

Mr. Kevin Cote offered discussion on two (2) possible locations.

1. Meeting House Way;
2. New England Pentecostal Church on Rte 38 (Bridge Street)

Mr. Kevin Cote offered discussion that the Town could work with the Church to purchase and or use part of their land on Meeting House Way to create a Community Garden on that piece of land and there would be a water source through Lyon's Park.

Mr. Kevin Cote continued his discussion that the second location at New England Pentecostal Church is creating a new youth program and may be interesting in partnering with the Town for a Community Garden.

Mr. Kevin Cote left the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

### **Veterans Memorial Park Location**

Ms. Masse Quinn offered discussion that she did do a walk with Paul Gagnon from the Conservation Commission on this property. While she did think the location had potential, she had concerns for the lack of water, the small amount of land, the condition of the land and the traffic when the summer programs are in session. She did like the parking option. Overall, she would not be in favor of having a Community Garden at this location.

Ms. Larson offered discussion that she is familiar with this piece of land and the location. She has concerns with the land. She believes it would cost monies to get the land from a Forest land use to where it needs to be used as a agricultural piece of land for a Community Garden. She also shares the same concern for having no water on site. Overall, she would not be in favor of having a Community Garden at this location.

Mr. Steve Doherty offered discussion that he is familiar with this piece of land and the location. He believes the land and the soils would not work for a Community Garden. Overall, he would not be in favor of having a Community Garden in this location.

Mr. James Fisher offered discussion that he is familiar with this piece of land and the location. He believes the land would take too long to prepare it for an agricultural use to support a Community Garden

Ms. Jenny Larson asked for a consensus to rule out the Veterans Memorial Park location for a Community Garden. All members were in favor of ruling out the Veterans Memorial Park location for a Community Garden

### **Old County Road**

Ms. Larson offered discussion that the members have had discussion on the above location in great lengths at this meeting so she would like to ask for a consensus to rule out the Old County Road as a location to be used for a Community Garden. All member were in favor of not using the Old County Road location for a Community Garden

### **Meeting House Way**

Ms Masse Quinn offered discussion saying she has walked this property. She believed the location has potential however was concerned about the legalities in reference to the section of land owned by the Town and the section of land owned by the Church. She was not in favor of spending monies to purchase land and has concerns about the liability if a party should get hurt. She was not in favor of having a Community Garden at this location

Ms. Charlene Takesian offered discussion on that there may be a three (3) lot boundary line between three different parties; the Town, the Church and the abutting neighbors

Mr. Steve Doherty offered discussion where the Church may give permission for a Community Garden however who is going to be the liability holder if someone gets hurt.

Ms. Larson offered discussion and shares the same concerns as the above members. She does not want to spend monies on land. She is not in favor of having a Community Garden at this location

Ms. Spottiswood offered discussion and does not want to cost the tax payers monies to purchase this piece of land.

Ms. Larson asked for a consensus to rule out the land at Meeting House Way for a Community Garden. The majority of the members had concerns and or questions outstanding so the members will do further research on the above location before ruling the location out

### **New England Pentecostal Church Location**

Ms. Larson offered discussion that the New England Pentecostal Church location could be another option for a Community Garden

Ms. Masse Quinn offered discussion that the church is in the process of putting together a new youth program. She does not know the lay of the land and would have to research more. She was not in favor of spending monies if the land was not ready to be used as Agricultural land.

Ms. Takesian offered discussion that she would reach out to the Church to see if a Community Garden is something they would want to pair up with the Town to do.

Ms. Larson asked if the members wanted to keep this on the list and research more. All members were in favor of doing more research and reaching out to the Church to see if they would be interested in working with the Town for a Community Garden

### **Raymond Park Location**

Ms. Masse Quinn offered discussion that she has walked this land. The land is very rocky. She also had concerns with safety where the land is tucked away. She was not in favor of having a Community Garden at this location

Ms. Larson offered discussion that the land is deeded for 4H purposes. She believes a benefit is the huge area for safe parking. The land is flat. She wanted to walk it again before making a decision to keep or not as an option for a Community Garden

The members were in favor of keeping this location on the list until other members could research more

### **Merriam Farm Location**

Ms. Larson offered discussion to see if the members were still in agreement to have the Community Garden be located at Merriam Farms. All members were in agreement that the land at Merriam Farm is the better location for a Community Garden.

Ms Masse Quinn offered discussion that she is still doing research for the Merriam Farm location and to keep it on the list as a potential spot for a Community Garden

Ms. Masse Quinn handed a copy of the below to each member:

- NH RSA 674:32b, "Existing Agricultural Uses and Activities; and
- NH RSA 672:1, "Declaration of Purpose

Ms. Spottiswood offered discussion to create a survey so the commission can make sure there is a demand and or interest for a Community Garden in our Town

### **Treasury Report**

Mr. John Spottiswood turned in three (3) receipts:

1. Blue Benny's with Sunny Crest Farms in the amount of \$162.00; and
2. Two (2) helium receipts to Party Center for \$59.99 each totaling \$119.98

**MOTION** to reimburse John Spottiswood a total of \$281.98 **Cooke/L. Spottiswood**

### **Old Homes Day**

Ms. Larson offered discussion that the Pelham Old Homes Day celebration will be held on September 16<sup>th</sup> this year.

Mr. James Fisher offered discussion that the Agricultural Commission can use his tractor and trailer and decorate it for the parade.

Ms. Cooke offered discussion that she can reach out to see if horses can be available to walk with the commission members in the parade. She will also reach out to see if we can include some antique tractors

Ms. Masse Quinn offered discussion that her family can walk again in the parade with chickens and roosters

Ms. Masse Quinn will email Tom and let him know that the Pelham Agricultural Commission will be part of the parade and that we need to be in the back away from noise for the horses

Ms. Larson offered discussion that we can continue the Old Homes Day discussion for our next meeting.

**MOTION.** To adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m. **Doherty/Cooke**

Respectfully submitted by:

Danielle Masse Quinn, Vice Chair





