



**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION AGENDA**

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

3:30 PM

2nd Floor **Committee** Conference  
Room

**Commission Members**

Sarah Wilton, Chair  
Charles Daloz, Vice Chair  
Councilor Bettina A. Chadbourne  
Mark Florenz, Member  
Aaron Moody, Member  
Catherine Souther, Member

**Staff Present**

Rhett Lamb, Planning Director  
Michele Chalice, Planner

- 1) Call to order
- 2) Approve January 10, 2018 minutes
- 3) Elect 2018 Chair & Vice Chair
- 4) Chicken Brochure– Revisions Approval
- 5) Agriculture Brochure Content Discussion
- 6) Other Updates
- 7) New Agenda Items
- 8) Next Meeting – Wednesday, March 14, at 3:30PM, Roe Ann Tsoulas, Director, Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition
- 9) Adjournment

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

AGRICULTURE COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

3:30 pm

City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Conference Room

**Members Present:**

Sarah Wilton, Chair  
Charles Daloz, Vice Chair  
Bettina A. Chadbourne, Councilor  
Catherine Souther, Member

**Staff Present:**

Michele Chalice, Planner

**Members not present:**

Aaron Moody, Member  
Mark Florenz, Member

1) **Call to order-**

Chair Wilton called meeting to order at 3:37 pm.

2) **Approve November 8, 2017 minutes-**

Councilor Chadbourne motioned to accept the November 8, minutes, Ms. Souther seconded and motion was passed unanimously.

Chair Wilton said they will refer back to the November 8 minutes, Page 3, Chicken brochure:  
“successful relations with chickens includes positive relations with one’s neighbors.”

3) **Approve 2018 Meeting Schedule-**

Ms. Chalice stated that the meeting schedule for 2018 says Thursdays instead of Wednesdays. Councilor Chadbourne motioned to accept meeting schedule presented with one correction: AGC meetings should read Wednesdays instead of Thursdays, and the dates are correct, Mr. Daloz seconded and motion passed unanimously.

4) **Discussion: DRAFT Agriculture Regulation Toolkit & DRAFT Right to Farm Flowchart**

Chair Wilton stated that the plan is an excellent template for the direction that AGC should be moving in. Vice Chair Daloz agreed and asked if the Master Plan includes Agriculture. Chair Wilton replied that AGC has a vision for agriculture and where it fits into the Master Plan. Ms. Chalice replied that Master Plan is in the CIP for review in 2021-2022.

Chair Wilton asked if there an agriculture person on the process and Ms. Chalice replied there are no specific parties designated for that process yet, however, there will be people selected. A schedule for involvement in the Land Use Code update is already in process and Ms. Tara Kessler is the representative. Chair Wilton asked if Land Use Code update is the first step in the vision for agriculture in Master Plan. Ms. Chalice said Land Use Code is a completely different project (Project 1) and is in progress. She said the Master Plan is a separate project and is slated to start in 2021 or 2022 and both will have opportunities for AGC to comment and relevancy for the AGC. Chair Wilton asked what the Land Use Code update deadline is and Ms. Chalice said it is still in its infancy and does not have a deadline yet.

Ms. Souther asked in what ways the Land Use Code Update could affect agriculture in the area. Ms. Chalice replied it focuses on zoning codes and there may be specifics that could be changed. Ms. Chadbourne stated that the Marlborough rezoning districting, people can have pets. Ms. Chalice replied they should not be used for commercial purposes. Ms. Souther stated AGC should be watching that they do not make any changes to Agriculture and Ms. Chalice said it is a long process. Mr. Daloz asked if AGC needs a motion to develop a vision to draw out the specifics for the next few years. Ms. Chalice said it could be a project-based visioning in isolation from the Master Plan in preparation for the next couple of years.

Mr. Daloz suggested acquiring an Antioch student. Ms. Chalice said she offered to draw up a scope and put the item on next month's agenda. Mr. Daloz suggested having a brainstorming forum about what steps to take for Agriculture in Keene. Chair Wilton suggested it is a spin-off from where they have already been from the Master Plan and ideally they should use those core areas as points of departure.

#### 5) **Recap. of Planning Board Regulatory Revision Discussion**

Chair Wilton updated commission on her observations of the recent Planning Board discussion where the draft "Local Regulation of Agriculture Toolkit" and the draft "NH Right To Farm Flowchart" were presented by Ms. Chalice. She said the reaction of the Planning Board to Agriculture was friendly and receptive. She asked what is the status of the statewide, draft Toolkit. Ms. Chalice replied that the template is a draft and she would be happy to have the notes from the presentation to the Planning Board made available to AGC. Chair Wilton asked who the people involved are. Ms. Chalice said one is a Regional Planner and the other is a Lawyer with a private firm. They secured grant funding and were looking for a second grant to create a series of tools or handouts that can help guide farmers through the complex process indicated on the flowchart. Ms. Chalice said their intent was to take the first step and create materials to be used by farmers. Chair Wilton asked if it statewide or regional. Ms. Chalice said the purpose shown on the flowchart is statewide and she hopes to get more information for the next meeting.

Mr. Daloz asked if AGC could approve the template for the Planning Board. Ms. Chalice replied that they could point out certain aspects of the flowchart that the commission thinks are

applicable to Keene. Chair Wilton suggested identifying core issues that Keene is experiencing. Ms. Souther asked if they would like the document to be disseminated to the public as it would help farmers in the area. She said she likes the idea of tailoring it regionally so it is more specific to Keene. Chair Wilton said perhaps they should wait until the final draft is available, and keep the toolkit and the flowchart on the agenda and update the status as it progresses. Ms. Chalice said the Planning Board is interested in waiting for the final document as well and incorporating it into the Land Use code update.

#### 6) **Chicken Brochure – Final Revisions Approval**

Ms. Chalice said Ms. Michaelov, a guest at November’s meeting, attempted to send revisions through Google docs but was unsuccessful. She will continue to contact her to get her suggestions.

Chair Wilton pointed out a correction on the chicken brochure: “successful relations with chickens includes positive relations with one’s neighbors.”

Councilor Chadbourne pointed out that perhaps water could freeze in the winter and maybe that should be cautioned against in the brochure. Ms. Souther said changing water a couple of times per day is the cheaper solution as water heaters are very expensive. Mr. Daloz said the electric systems could be a public safety hazard and perhaps they could take into account the safety risk. He added there are cheap electric systems that can be invested in to heat the water. Ms. Chalice said the brochure is not meant to be very specific and instead suggested adding wording under Housing stating “caution should be taken if heating coops or water during the winter months.” Members agreed to have Mr. Florenz review the language at the next meeting.

Members agreed that “online resources” should be added to the middle of the back page of the brochure. Chair Wilton suggested adding “online resources” under the City of Keene. Councilor Chadbourne stated that “online resources” should be placed above the City of Keene and to free up space for a Safety section. Members agreed that the City of Keene insignia should be at the bottom of the page and online resources above at least with the current draft. Councilor Chadbourne suggested placing another picture on the front cover of the brochure. Ms. Souther suggested placing a picture of mobile coops to create awareness about their function.

Chair Wilton asked if another draft would be available for the next meeting and Ms. Chalice agreed and said the Ms. Nancy Michalov, a guest from last month, made revisions to the brochure and she will incorporate them for review at the next meeting. Councilor Chadbourne suggested that maybe they could have Mr. John Rogers from Code Enforcement review the chicken brochure. She said she had neighbors contact Mr. Rogers and he told them it was illegal to sell the eggs. Ms. Souther said she read the rules and in the City of Keene keeping backyard livestock means you cannot sell any products from the livestock. Ms. Chalice said she would come up with some verbiage and cite the “non-commercial” regulations to put on the brochure. Chair Wilton said they will review the Chicken brochure at their next meeting.

#### 7) **Agriculture Brochure**

Chair Wilton suggested the Agriculture brochure should tie into the regulation toolkit and flowchart template. Ms. Chalice asked if Chair Wilton is aiming to condense the information from the regulation toolkit and flowchart. Ms. Souther suggested putting some of the high points

from the flowchart and regulatory toolkit into the Agriculture brochure. Ms. Chalice suggested they could form a working group and meet for coffee somewhere to design which aspects of the toolkit they would like to include in the brochure. Chair Wilton asked if anyone is interested in coming up with an agriculture brochure together to sign a draft for the next meeting. Ms. Souther volunteered to lead the meeting. Councilor Chadbourne suggested letting other members know about the working group idea to see if they would like to join as well. Ms. Souther said she would be meeting with Mr. Moody later and could ask him if he would like to join. Ms. Chalice said if they do meet, she would need draft ideas to be sent to her at least a week and a half before the next meeting to become part of the packet.

8) **New or Other Business**

Chair Wilton asked Ms. Chalice to put Chair Election at the top of the agenda for next month.

Mr. Daloz suggested going through updates every meeting like they do in other committees. He also suggested updating committee on the work of other groups, for example, local farms, Friends of Open Space's pocket park idea. Ms. Chalice suggested having another agenda item labeled "Other Updates." She also suggested creating a Doodle Poll for an AGC retreat to identify goals for the coming year. They would have someone facilitate the session and talk about topics of most interest and work with those topics to identify action steps.

Councilor Chadbourne added that they do discuss different ideas that do not get fleshed out and perhaps they should be prioritizing items during a retreat. Ms. Chalice suggested talking to the Monadnock Farm Coalition and because they do related work so it would be helpful to for people from the Coalition to come talk to the commission to discuss their work so they do not replicate actions. Chair Wilton said they are non-governmental and volunteer-based. Ms. Chalice said they are working on similar issues so it could set the context for AGC's actions. Ms. Chalice suggested they take a vote and Ms. Chalice could contact them to see when they are available to present to the commission. Councilor Chadbourne motioned to contact Ms. Roe-Ann Tasoulous, Mr. Daloz seconded and motion was passed unanimously.

Ms. Chalice stated she will contact Ms. Nancy Michalov to see if she is considering become a member (if she is a resident of Keene) and for brochure suggestions.

9) **Next Meeting – Wednesday, February 14, at 3:30PM**

10) **Adjournment-** Chair Wilton adjourned meeting at 4:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute-Taker

## Why Keep Chickens?

As people are becoming more and more interested in knowing where food comes from, the trend of raising backyard chickens is growing.

Raising backyard chickens can be a rewarding experience and a great way to teach kids about nature, agriculture and the responsibility of caring for animals.



See the online resources below for more details:

**University of New Hampshire**  
<https://extension.unh.edu/Poultry>

**Backyard Chicken Blog**  
<http://www.backyardchickens.com/>

**My Pet Chicken**  
<https://www.mypetchicken.com/>

## City of Keene Agriculture Commission

<http://www.ci.keene.nh.us/agricultural-commission>  
3 Washington Street, Keene, NH 03431  
Phone: 603 352 5474



## Be a Good Chicken Neighbor

Ideas and information to consider when raising chickens in the City of Keene, NH.



\*Brochure images graciously shared by Dawn

Kopczynski, Keene NH

## Where are chickens allowed?

Keene Health and Safety Regulations regarding the keeping of chickens depend on the Zoning District in which you reside:

- Rural and Agricultural Districts have no restrictions on raising chickens.
- Low and Medium Density Zoning Districts allow for the Non-Commercial Raising of Animals. No permits are currently required.

## If there is a problem?

Sec. 10-27 of the Keene Code of Ordinances states “The City of Keene’s Animal Control Officer has the authority to enforce and to investigate all reports of violations involving animals in this article and of RSA 466:1 et seq.” Keene’s Animal Control Officer can be reached at (603) 209-1740.



## Being a Good Chicken Neighbor

With a little planning, you can have happy chickens and neighbors:

**Talk to your neighbors ahead of time** - Successful relations with chickens includes positive relationships with one’s neighbors. It is therefore recommended that an initial ownership step be communicating to all one’s neighbors their desire & intent to own chickens.

**Roosters are loud** – Keeping roosters is not recommended if you have neighbors nearby, or your lot is less than 5 acres. Roosters are the primary cause of chicken related complaints.

**Limit the number of chickens** – 4 to 6 chickens is a reasonable number for small lots (<1 acre) as this will minimize any noise or odor issues.

**Good fences make good neighbors** – Chickens should be fenced at all times to prevent them from leaving your property.

**Coop Placement** – Chicken housing should be located at least 10 feet from any property boundary and 25 feet from neighboring houses.

## Being a Good Chicken Owner

**Housing** – Mature hens should have at least 3 square feet of floor space per bird. Chicken pens need to be secure enough to keep out predators.

**Food and Water** –

1. Buying a complete chicken feed is the best way to get started. Make sure to store it in a rodent-free container. Many owners also feed only during the day to reduce rodent problems.
2. **Make sure clean water is available;** chickens tend to *foul* their water swiftly ☹. Many creative options can prevent water from freezing during the winter. One example is to use a large, black, rubber tire set in the sun. Adding several ping pong balls can keep a layer of ice from forming.

**Sanitation** – Keep your birds, housing and equipment clean, and wash your own and children’s hands with soap and water after contact with poultry or their litter.

**Fire Hazard** – Chicken coops can be a hazard if precautions are not taken. It is generally recommended that one’s coop not be connected to one’s primary residence. Heaters are not recommended unless they are installed by a professional electrician.

# Memo

Date: November 17, 2017  
TO: Planning Board Members  
FROM: Michele Chalice, Planner  
RE: Planning Board Site Plan Regulations regarding Agricultural Structures.

At the October 23, 2017 Planning Board meeting the Board asked for a discussion regarding the “Planning Board standards as they relate to agricultural uses.” There was also a request to explore “easing of the process where appropriate.”

The following request to the NH Planner’s Link resulted in one response:

*“Our Planning Board would like to find a way to have our Planning Board regulations and site plan review process be less onerous for local farmers. Has anyone worked on this or might someone have an example of their community’s effort to assist local farmers getting through the development process with less time and cost?”*

A single response was offered:

*Site plan approval is not required for agricultural activities or structures that do not involve the onsite retail sale of products or services to the general public, or for seasonal roadside farm stands limited to the sale of the agricultural products produced on the farm on which it is located or other agricultural properties owned or leased by the same agricultural enterprise.”*

While appealing on several levels, I suspect that Planning Board members are able to see the potential risks to such a blanket provision given the Planning Board’s recent review of the new Archway Farms hoop house immediately adjacent to Hurricane Brook.

Very fortunately, I attended a very recent NH Municipal Association conference session titled “A Toolkit for Local Regulation of Agriculture” presented by Amy Manzelli, Managing Attorney for BCM Environmental & Land Law, PLLC and Theresa Walker, Consultant Environmental Planner, Rockingham Planning Commission on behalf of the NH Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture. This group is an ad hoc, loose organization that meets infrequently but was able to find grant funding to create this toolkit. A draft version of the working document is attached.

In summary, protections currently exist to limit over-regulation, in particular, Section 67:32-b states “(only) some farming expansions...may be made subject to special exception, building permit or site plan approval:

- Livestock, poultry, or other animals or a retail farm stand.
- Farm stand/retail operation, to prevent traffic and parking from adversely impacting adjacent property, street and sidewalks or public safety.”

A working version (draft) graphic showing this particular regulation in the broader context of NH’s applicable agricultural regulatory structure is attached (look for clouds). In conversation at this session, the approach of working with the applicant to propose requesting exemptions from expensive aspects of the current regulations was deemed a solid approach for the time being. The great news is that NH communities’ interest in supporting local agriculture is driving a thorough analysis by this particular group of NH’s regulatory structure intent on protecting the broader interests of the public. The challenging aspect is that no NH community has yet progressed to the point of creating a more user-friendly checklist that could enable farmers to go through the required public and resource protective regulations in a more user-friendly manner.

Please see the attached materials for your review and discussion.