

## **MINUTES OF THE CURRENT USE BOARD**

### **Approved as Amended**

**DATE:** January 5, 2016

**TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** NHDRA, 109 Pleasant Street, Concord

### **BOARD MEMBERS:**

Senator Regina Birdsell  
Stephan Hamilton, NHDRA, Chairman  
David McMullen, City Official  
Gary Karp, Towns <5,000  
Carol Andrews, NHACC  
Lindsay Webb, NH Fish & Game  
Susan Bryant-Kimball, Public Member, Forest Land

Representative James Belanger  
Lorraine Merrill, Dept. of Agriculture  
Vacant, Towns >5,000  
Jon Wraith, UNH Life Science & Agriculture  
Susan Francher, NH Forests and Lands  
Chuck Souther, Farm Land  
Thomas Thomson, Public Member

### **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**

Scott Dickman, NHDRA  
John Beardmore, Commissioner NHDRA  
Linda Kennedy, NHDRA

Jasen Stock, NHTOA  
Rob Johnson, NHFBF

Chairman Hamilton convened the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

### **Introductions**

### **Minutes 1/14/2015**

**A motion to approve the minutes of January 14, 2015 was made by Mr. Tom Thomson; and Ms. Susan Francher seconded.** People abstained that were not here for the January 2015 meeting. **The minutes were approved as written.**

### **Discussion by Commissioner Beardmore**

Commissioner Beardmore had a brief discussion regarding timely filing of statements of financial interest per RSA 15-A Financial Interest as directed by an audit by the Legislative Budget Office.

### **Assessment Ranges**

Ms. Susan Francher did a synopsis on forest land assessment ranges and a 40% stewardship adjustment for discussion. Ms. Francher explained the different documents and model outputs.

Mr. Scott Dickman spoke regarding the growth rates, acreage, volumes, 30 year cash flow, DCF analysis and income producing land only etc. and discussed his findings. Chairman Hamilton advised this is a very intensive economic analysis of the income producing capability of the land. He then spoke of the stewardship program and that they found from the public over the years that the difference between stewardship and non-stewardship

was compressing and becoming less beneficial. It was decided in the last couple years that rather than calculate a separate value for the stewardship ranges, a percentage factor would be applied. Chairman Hamilton advised it appeared to be working as they are hearing less and less public comment on this. **Ms. Francher suggested moving forward with the ranges shown under “Current Use Rate Comparison – Forest Land Categories”.** **Mr. Tom Thomson seconded. All approved, and motion passed.**

Chairman Hamilton gave a brief outline of the differences between farmland and forestland. Commissioner Lorraine Merrill then spoke of the findings on farmland assessment rates of \$25 to \$425 per acre and proceeded to explain their findings regarding corn silage and hay crop prices and costs etc. She advised that they recommend that the rates stay where they have been at \$25 to \$425 per acre because of the mitigating factors. **Commissioner Merrill moved that the farmland assessment rates stay at \$25 - \$425. Mr. Jon Wraith seconded. All approved, and motion passed.**

### **Public Forum Dates and Locations**

Chairman Hamilton spoke of the locations for public forums. He advised there is no statutory duty to have a quorum of this board but there is no statutory language that would allow them to have less than a quorum. Therefore, the board does try to have a quorum of the Current Use Board at each of the public forums. Chairman Hamilton stated that the rulemaking process on the assessment ranges has to be done by April 1<sup>st</sup>. The following dates and locations were tentatively decided upon for the public forums:

- January 20, 2016 6:00 p.m. in Lancaster, NH
- January 21, 2016 6:00 p.m. in Lebanon, NH
- January 26, 2016 10:00 a.m. in Concord, NH at the NHDRA (w/board meeting following)

Chairman Hamilton spoke of the current use records, how they are kept, what they look like in communities etc.

### **Legislative Updates**

Senator Regina Birdsell asked that people let her know of anything that looks concerning as she is the Chair of Public and Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Dave McMullen asked Mr. Gary Karp about S.B. 121, and Mr. Karp gave some information on this bill. Chairman Hamilton asked if anyone knew where on the docket this was, and Senator Birdsell advised she could find out. Chairman Hamilton explained the bill in more detail. Senator Birdsell advised she would talk with Senator Boutin on this. A discussion followed including “angle of repose”. Senator Birdsell will express her concern to the senate regarding the unintended consequences of this legislation. Chairman Hamilton will contact Senator Boutin and Senator Birdsell will bring it up in caucus the next day.

### **Agricultural Structures: When would LUCT be needed**

Chairman Hamilton spoke of when LUCT would be triggered and hoop tunnels. He wanted it on the agenda to hear from others as to whether this is a persistent question. Commissioner Merrill advised it’s sporadically consistent. She spoke of A-frame huts for pasturing pigs, (buried) water lines, pasture water access and for irrigation systems – she does not understand how that is developing the land when the agricultural value is just being enhanced. A discussion followed and suggestions were given for a comprehensive concept. Chairman Hamilton advised that the DRA will draft something for them to look at on January 26<sup>th</sup> for a helpful set of guidelines. Mr. Karp suggested maybe it would be helpful to have a speaker at the monthly meetings to clarify temporary buildings etc.

### **Agriculture/Forestry Roads leading to Agriculture or Forestry Building**

Mr. Tom Thomson advised that past Commissioner Steve Taylor was adamant that roads were in current use if they led to forestry and/or agricultural building. A brief discussion followed. Chairman Hamilton advised it was time for a re-write on this.

### **Election of Board Chairman**

**Commissioner Merrill nominated Mr. Steve Hamilton; and Mr. John Wraith seconded. All were in favor and agreed on closing nominations. All were in favor of retaining Mr. Hamilton as Chairman; motion passed.**

### **Public Comment**

There were no public comments, and the scheduled person for public comments was unable to be at the meeting.

Ms. Susan Francher spoke of regulatory issues for forestry to bring to the towns' attention. Commissioner Merrill spoke of the efforts at local planning boards in the Great Bay region to bring forward new zoning regulations that would dramatically increase buffers for wetlands and wildlife situations and the restrictions this would pose on forestry and landscaping etc. Chairman Hamilton advised maybe threatened species, buffers etc. could be part of the re-write of the Current Use Booklet.

Ms. Susan Francher moved to adjourn and was seconded by acclamation at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Elizabeth McGill  
NH Department of Revenue Administration – Municipal and Property Division

Documentation relative to the Current Use Board may be submitted, requested or reviewed by:

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Current Use Board  
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