

**MINUTES OF THE
CURRENT USE BOARD
PUBLIC FORUM MEETING**

Approved as Amended

DATE: November 7, 2016 **TIME:** 6:00 p.m. **PLACE:** Wakefield Town Hall, 132 Meadow Street
Sanbornville, NH

BOARD MEMBERS:

Senator Regina Birdsell ~ <i>Absent</i>	Representative James Belanger ~ <i>Absent</i>
Stephan Hamilton, NHDRA, Chairman	Lorraine Merrill, Dept. of Agriculture
David McMullen, City Official ~ <i>Absent</i>	Andrea Lewy, Towns >5,000 ~ <i>Absent</i>
Norm Bernaiche, Towns <5,000 ~ <i>Absent</i>	Jon Wraith, UNH Life Science & Agriculture ~ <i>Absent</i>
Barbara Richter, NHACC ~ <i>Absent</i>	Susan Francher, NH Forests and Lands
Lindsay Webb, NH Fish & Game ~ <i>Absent</i>	Chuck Souther, Farm Land
Susan Bryant-Kimball, Public Member, Forest Land	Thomas Thomson, Public Member ~ <i>Absent</i>

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

Jennifer Wright, Sandwich	Sumner Dole, Canterbury
Cindy Bickford, Wakefield	Donna-Lee Woods, Lee
Wendy Scribner, UNH Coop Ext	Kathleen Dole, Canterbury

Introductions

Presentation Overview

Chairman Stephan Hamilton spoke of the current use law and gave some background on current use, including highest and best use, income producing capability, conservation, agricultural use etc. He also talked of the current use handbook, rulemaking revisions in the near future, when agricultural uses are allowed in the current use program when less than 10 acres, understanding the term “agriculture”, (RSA 21:34-a, II(b) (5) and agritourism. He discussed changes to forestland ranges and explained about forestland and stewardship assessments. He went over 5 year rolling averages and the valuation formula, the range of value of \$25 and \$425 per acre, Soil Potential Index, the drought and its impact etc.

Current Use Handbook Update

Chairman Hamilton advised that a subcommittee had been organized to update the current use handbook with the newer version featuring more descriptions, more examples, and being a more usable resource. The plan is to have the booklet ready for April 1, 2017.

Rulemaking Revisions

Chairman Hamilton spoke of RSA 79-A:4, IV and the Current Use Board as well as parcels and tracts, and leaning toward eliminating requirements of markings on the ground in favor of good maps. A member of the public asked if Chairman Hamilton was talking about marking different categories or marking the perimeter of

the property. Chairman Hamilton explained. Ms. Susan Bryant-Kimball commented on better resources being available now. Ms. Jennifer Wright commented that she felt it would be extremely detrimental to do away with the requirement of markings on the ground as without the markings on the ground: (1) is the property owner meeting the current use rules and (2) whether or not there are no disqualifying structures or betterments in that area. Further, the town's compliance officer can clearly see that the proposed structure within or outside the current use boundaries etc. She asked that this be reconsidered and to think of the challenges to the town. Chairman Hamilton replied that this requirement of placing markings on the ground only applies for the process of applying – it doesn't apply retrospectively. Ms. Wright replied that she does not feel that is clear in the Current Use handbook and explained. A discussion followed between Chairman Hamilton and Ms. Wright. A member of the public then asked if the Board would/could put anything in the law about the map requirement. Chairman Hamilton replied and a discussion followed including how it would be approached, what kind of penalty, property condition, accessibility, productive capability etc.

Structures, Buildings and Disqualifying Events

Chairman Hamilton advised the board is attempting to improve the definition of these terms for more uniformity in application and understanding.

Agricultural Use of Less than 10 Acres

A brief update on this was discussed and explained including agricultural property of less than 10 acres enrolled in Current Use, limited to growing crops in the ground and smaller farms organized around keeping livestock when current definition excludes livestock. Ms. Donna-Lee Woods commented how her goats forage and graze on their less than 10 acres – that is the crop they eat and they are not housed. A discussion followed. A member of the public asked about the process – members of the board clarified. Mr. Sumner Dole commented on agriculture and agritourism, unsure why they “split hairs” etc. A long discussion followed including reapplying for Current Use, updating maps and legends, categories, inaccessible woodland and unproductive land. A public member asked about 20% recreational adjustment and commercial activity. Commissioner Merrill and Chairman Hamilton explained. A discussion followed. Another public member asked about what is a “crop” and a discussion followed on that to try and clarify.

The meeting ended with Chairman Hamilton thanking the members of the public for coming and advising of the next public meeting on Thursday, November 10, 2016 at the NH Department of Revenue, Concord, NH.

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:

Telephone: (603) 230-5967
Facsimile: (603) 230-5943
Web: <http://www.revenue.nh.gov>

In person at 109 Pleasant Street, Concord
In writing to: NH Dept of Revenue Admin.
Current Use Board
PO Box 487
Concord, NH 03302-0487