Town of Canterbury
Agricultural Commission Bylaws

Mission Statement

The Canterbury Agricultural Commission is the voice of agriculture in the community. The Commission will promote and encourage agricultural interests, advocate for Landowners, and educate the public at large concerning agriculture. The Commission will provide input, advice, and assistance on agriculturally related matters to the Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, the Conservation Commission, and to other interested parties.

Purpose and Authority

1. The purpose of the Canterbury Agricultural Commission is to promote Agriculture within the Town of Canterbury and to act as a resource on agricultural matters to other Canterbury Boards and Commissions.

2. These rules of procedure are adopted under the authority of New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) 673:4-b, "Agricultural Commissions".

Membership

1. The Canterbury Agricultural Commission shall consist of five to seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

2. Three alternate members, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, may serve on the Agricultural Commission as authorized by RSA 673:4-b,II.

3. Except for the Selectmen's representative, all members shall be appointed/or three-year terms. Terms of office will be staggered so that two regular, and up to one alternate, members are appointed each year.

4. Terms of Office commence on April 1 and end on March 31 three years subsequent; provided however, that the term shall continue until successors have been appointed.

5. A vacancy occurring by other than term expiration shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as an original appointment.

6. The Secretary shall forward to the municipal clerk; for recording, each Commission member's term appointment and expiration dates.

Officers

1. The Commission Officers and their duties shall be:
    a. Chairman: The Chairman shall preside over all meetings and hearings in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order, and shall, with the assistance of the secretary and town staff, post meeting notices, prepare an annual report, and perform other duties customary to the office.
    b. Vice-Chairman: The Vice-Chairman shall preside in the Chairman's absence, and shall have the full powers of the Chairman on matters that come before the Commission during the Chairman's absence.
    c. Secretary: The Secretary shall be responsible for the maintenance of Commission minutes and records. The Commission may retain a Recording Secretary whose records shall be reviewed by the Commission for accuracy.

2. Commission officers shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the Commission, at the April meeting.

Duties of Commission

1. Promote agricultural activities within the Town of Canterbury

2. Be available to advise and assist other Town Boards and Commissions on agricultural issues.

Committees

1. The Chairman may from time to time appoint subcommittees for any purpose deemed necessary. Each subcommittee shall report to the Commission at each meeting or at such other times as may be requested.

Meetings

1. All meetings, including non-public sessions, shall be held in accordance with RSA 91-A, as amended.

2. Regular meetings shall be held monthly at the Meeting House at 6:00 p.m., normally on the third Tuesday of each month, or at the call of the Chair or a quorum of the Board.

3. Special meetings and/or workshops may be called by the Chairman or, in her/his absence, by the Vice-Chairman; or at the request of three Commission members. Public notice and notice to each member shall be given at least 24 hours prior to such meeting, excluding Sundays and legal holidays. The notice shall specify the meeting's purpose.

4. Quorum: A majority of Commission membership shall constitute a quorum, including alternates sitting in place of regular members. If any regular Commission member is absent from a meeting or hearing, or is disqualified from sitting on a particular application, the Chairman shall designate an alternate member to sit in place of the absent or disqualified member. Alternate members have all regular member powers and duties in regards to any matter under consideration on which the regular member is unable to act. The alternate member should continue until the matter is completed; the regular member does not vote on that matter.

5. A motion, duly seconded, shall be carried by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members present.

6. Members are requested to attend all regular meetings and as many other meetings and site walks as they can. Notification of absence must be submitted to the Chairman in advance. Continued absences (more than three consecutive unexcused meetings) will result in a letter of warning to the member. If absences continue, the member will be requested to submit his/her resignation by a date certain. If the member does not submit his/her resignation by that date, the Board of Selectmen will be so notified and requested to remove the member for cause.

7. Disqualification: Any Commission member who has a personal or pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in any matter before the Commission, shall be disqualified fiom voting or speaking on said matter. If any members find it necessary to be disqualified from sitting on a particular case, s/he shall notify the Chairman as soon as possible so that an alternate may be requested to fill the place. Either the Chairman or the member shall announce the disqualification before the discussion or the public hearing on the application begins. The member disqualified shall leave the Commission table during all deliberations and the public hearing on the matter.
   If uncertainty arises as to whether a Commission member should disqualify her/himself on the request of that member or the request of another member of the Commission, the Commission shall vote on the question of whether that member should be disqualified. Such request and vote shall be made at the commencement of any required public hearing. A vote on a question of disqualification shall be advisory and non-binding, and may not be requested by persons other than Commission members.

8. Order of Business shall be (as applicable):
    a. Call to order by Chairman
    b. Chairman's Comments
    c. Public Comments
    d. Roll Call
    e. Public Hearing
    f. New Business
    g. Old Business
    h. Unscheduled Commission Matters
    i. Nonpublic Session
    j. Member's Comments
    k. Adjournment

Nonpublic Session

1. Nonpublic sessions are only allowed for specific exemptions detailed in RSA 91-A.

2. The Agricultural Commission may exclude the public only after passing a motion stating the exemption relied upon for the nonpublic session. The motion, duly seconded, must be carried by an affirmative, recorded, roll-call vote of a majority of the members present.

3. All discussion and decisions made during nonpublic session shall be confined to the matters set out in the motion.

4. Minutes of proceedings in nonpublic session shall be kept, and the record of all actions shall be made available for public inspection as outlined in RSA 91-A:3, III. If it is determined by a recorded vote of 2/3 of the members present that divulgence of the information would have an adverse affect (see RSA 91-A:3, III), information may be withheld by sealing the minutes until (in the opinion of a majority of members) the applicable circumstances no longer apply. In that case, immediately after the nonpublic session, the Commission will take a roll call vote in public session to seal the minutes.

Joint Meetings and Hearings

1. The Commission may hold joint meetings and hearings with other "land use boards" including the Planning Board. Each Board shall have discretion whether or not to hold such joint meeting or hearing. (RSA 676:2)

2. Joint business meetings with another local land use board may be held at any time when called jointly by the Chairman of the two boards.

3. The rules of procedure for joint meetings and hearings, the subject matter of which involves the Commission, shall be the same as these rules of procedure except that the order of business shall be as follows:
    a. Call to order by Chairman.
    b. Introduction of members of both boards by Chairman.
    c. Explanation of reason for joint meeting/hearing by Chairman.
    d. In the case of a public hearing relative to a requested permit or an application for a plan of approval, or both, the applicant shall be called to present his proposal.
    e. Adjournment.
4. Each board involved in a joint public hearing shall make its own decision, based on its criteria for the particular matter.

Records

1. Commission records shall be kept by the Secretary and shall be made available for public inspection at Town's office as required by RSA 676:3,II.
2. Minutes of meetings including Commission member's names, persons appearing before the Commission, and a brief description of the subject matter, shall be open to public inspection as required in RSA 91-A:2,II.

Amendments

1. These bylaws and rules of procedure may be amended by a majority vote of Commission members provided that such amendment is read at the meeting immediately preceding the meeting at which the vote is to be taken. The amended bylaws and rules of procedure shall be filed with the municipal clerk.

Adopted by the Canterbury Agricultural Commission on October 20, 2026.