

Eastern Connecticut RC&D Council
Monday, October 24, 2011
Lebanon Community Center
Lebanon, CT
12:05 pm - 2:05 pm
Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Eastern Connecticut RC&D Council, Inc. was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by President John Guskowski.

Present:

John Guskowski, WLA, President
Barbara Kelly, NCCD
Margot Burns, CRERPA, Secretary
Elaine Sych, ERT
Phil Chester, WINCOG, Vice President
Amanda Fargo-Johnson, ERT CFEP
Wini Olsen, Essex Land Trust
Paula Stahl, UConn Extension
Judy Rondeau, ECCD

Norman St.Jean, USDA
Raymond Covino, NRCS
Maura Robie
Tom Seidel, SECCOG
Lois Bruinooge, TLGV
Catherine A. Osten, First Selectman, Town
of Sprague

RC&D Program Update

The National and Regional Associations are struggling due to the lack of funding for the Federal FY 2011 and FY 2012 and we will not have a federal coordinator for that period. Funding has cut staff substantially but they continue to try and secure funding at the federal level and become involved with the newly established White House Rural Council. The New England Region Association meeting will be held in Dover, N.H. for 1 1/2 day session on October 24th and 25th.

The ECTRC&D office will be moving from the existing Brooklyn location to Tolland County Agricultural Experiment Station in Vernon.

2 contribution agreements were signed with NRCS. The first for \$15,000 for *Project Out Reach* for Farm Bill and partner outreach, and the second for the 3 day Soil Health Workshops that will be taking place November 15th, 16th, and 17th. We signed and received back the 319 contract for looking at dried manure solids as peat replacement for bedding plants and will be signing sub agreements with our contractors.

Secretary's Report

Discussion concerned adding the location of the last meeting.

Motion: To approve the minutes of 8/15/11 with corrections.

Motion made by: Phil Chester

Seconded by: Judy Rondeau

Voted: Motion passed

Treasurer's Report:

Discussion concerned examination of the budget summaries. Our Federal Form 990 and Financial Statement were completed and reviewed and found to be complete and ready to file. The 2 contribution agreements signed with NRCS were not included as of yet but will be added to the next summary statement.

Motion: To receive the report and place in file.

Motion made by: Paula Stahl

Seconded by: Phil Chester

Voted: Motion passed

Environmental Review Team:

Elaine Sych

Elaine is waiting for reports for Gunther/TAC Property from Nick Bellantoni and Eric Thomas and from Nick Bellantoni for the Ridgefield Ridgebury School outdoor class room project. New reviews to be scheduled are a subdivision in Ansonia and Naugatuck's Long Meadow Pond Brook. Possible new projects include: a re-review of the Preserve in Old Saybrook; New London – the Riverside Park Piece the Coast Guard is considering purchasing from the City; Burlington – a 17 acre open space purchase on Covey Road; Wethersfield – the Wilkus Farm; and Orange – the 200 acre Hubbell Property Open Space. Elaine participated in a Community Forum for the Town of Beacon Falls Conservation Commission to discuss their diverse landscape and outdoor recreation and greenway opportunities. ERT is providing funding to UConn's Extension Community and Natural Resource Planning Program to support land use training workshops in the CRERPA and Central CT Regional Planning Areas. There will be a spring workshop series possibly for the Northwest and Southeast areas of the State.

Committee Reports

Agriculture – Phil Chester

The last meeting was in September. The draft *Municipal Livestock Regulations Guide* has been sent out for review. The Agvocate program continues and a 4th Agviablility Grant for the Agvocate will be applied for next month to increase the capacity of the program within the existing participating communities. Another possible Agviablility Grant will be applied for to hire a butcher to work out of the Brothers Quality Slaughter House to work on the cut, rap, and pack portion of the production process. Bozrah has established an Ag Committee.

Greenways – Margot Burns

Judy Rondeau, ECCD, has joined the Greenways Committee. The Greenway Survey is out and on line on the RC&D and CACIWC web sites and referred to in the fall issue of the Habitat. It will also be distributed at CACIWC Annual Conference. The next project will be tackling how best to provide the (3) Juno GPS receivers to the non-profit and municipal community. The Park River Project will partner with the City of Hartford Park and Recreation Department to further

the project as a whole and the re-scoping of the north and south branch project areas is nearing completion.

Livable Communities – Elaine Sych

The farm to school grant is still undergoing review by the State and we are waiting for an extension. The shoreline protection manual creation is underway and is expected to be completed in April 2012. The Ecological Landscaping Network has sent updates for the RC&D web site and the Tree Wardens Association used the grant provided to them for scholarships for their fall training program as a 50/50 match. The New England Beef to Institute Study is out.

Connecticut Farm Energy Program: Amanda Fargo – Johnson

All 4 of the 2011 REAP Grants were awarded for a total of \$360,218.00 and they are currently working with Jewett City Greenhouses for 2012 REAP submission. The Farm Energy Program is now a State wide program. Farm Energy attended and had a booth at Celebrating Agriculture in Woodstock, CT, on September 24, 2011. They are currently planning 8 upcoming CFEP 2011-2012 Winter Grant Writing Workshops with their partner organizations. A new logo for the program has been finalized and a postcard has been sent to the States ag producers. Comments were submitted on the new LREC and ZREC proposal to NU. The CFEP REBEG Grant 2 is completed and final reports submitted to RD and RBEG Grant 3 is open at this time with Rural Development. BMP guides have been distributed to Congressman Joe Courtney's office and to Griffen Greenhouse & Nursery Supplies. Farm Energy will be attending the CT Farm to Chef Annual Meeting on Nov. 7th, and will sponsor and attend the CT Farm Bureau Annual Meeting on Nov. 18th.

New Business:

Project Manager Position Interviews:

4 Project Managers have been interviewed and 2 more will be interviewed for a part time position funded through this fiscal year. It is hoped that we will hire by the beginning of November.

Town of Sprague:

Funding request for assistance in purchasing material needed to build (4) 4'x12' raised beds for a community garden on Town owned property adjacent to Shetucket Village, a 20 unit housing environment for seniors and the disabled.

Motion: To provide \$500.00 in funding to the Town of Sprague for project support with the understanding that the Council feels the project deserves municipal support and that a short report should be provided to the Council when the project is complete.

Motion made by: Phil Chester

Seconded by: Lois Bruinooge

Discussion concerned whether the property would be open to the public, which it would, but priority would be given to Shetucket Village residences. An outreach component the Council would like to include would be to ask the community if the project encouraged them to garden and produce some of their own food at home and if they found participation to be an educational experience.

Motion: The project would be show cased and part of community outreach to area schools and ag commissions (Sprague, Canterbury, Bozrah, Scotland, Franklin). The Council requests a design for the beds be submitted with the cost of the materials to be purchased and to inform the Council when the project is done. The project would fall under the purview of the Livable Communities Committee.

Voted: Motion passed.

Town of Old Lyme Conservation Commission:

Request for funding of \$900.00 to design, create and install one banner to be hung for two separate months over Halls Road, a main entrance to the Town of Old Lyme. The banner would discourage the use of pesticides in order to prevent non-point source pollution and improve water quality.

Motion: To deny the request without prejudice and suggest that the applicant give President Guskowski a call to discuss the project.

Motion mad by: Phil Chester

Seconded by: Lois Bruinooge

Voted: Motion Passed

North End Action Team:

A request for funding in the amount of \$1,500.00 to continue their Double Dollars Program for the remainder of their market season for 2011.

Motion: Funding request denied but the Council would like them to come to a future meeting to discuss their program for 2012 and how RC&D can help them further urban community farming principals and local food availability within the State.

Motion made by: Lois Bruinooge

Seconded by: Wini Olsen

Voted: Motion Passed

Discussion concerned the Shane Donahue, Town of Canterbury Economic Development Commission and the \$500.00 funding for a project to remove garbage from the Quinebaug River. The project was unable to be completed due to high water levels and it is unclear as to the future of the project.

Old Business:

Letters of Submission need to be submitted.

Partner Updates:

NRCS – Ray Covino

Oct. 7th was application deadline for NRCS conservation and easement program with over 200 applications with an average fund request of \$20,000.00. Over the last nine years applications have dramatically risen with projects costs going down. Northeast CT and New London County under applying. The new Ultima (?) employees have started.

Council on Soil and Water has not met since the last full council meeting.

Celebrating Ag is presenting the Council with a Certificate of Appreciation for supporting Celebrating Ag.

HEAP manuals are available at the RC&D office in Vernon.

The CT Coastal Conservation District presented Eastern CT RC&D with an award for Partner of the Year.

The next meeting is scheduled for Dec. 12th, 2011 at noon. Location to be determined.

Motion: To adjourn meeting at 2:05pm

Motion made by: Phil Chester

Second: Judy Rondeau

Voted: Motion Passed.