

Eastern Connecticut RC&D Council
Monday, August 15, 2011
CRERPA Office
455 Boston Post Road
Old Saybrook, CT
12:22 pm - 2:00 pm
Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Eastern Connecticut RC&D Council, Inc. was called to order at 12:22 p.m. by President John Guskowski.

Present:

John Guskowski, WLA, President
Margot Burns, CRERPA, Secretary
Elaine Sych, ERT
Phil Chester, WINCOG, Vice President
Amanda Fargo-Johnson, ERT CFEP
Tom ODell, CRCCD
Wini Olsen, Essex Land Trust
Paula Stahl, GVI
Lois Bruinooge, TLGV

Judy Rondeau, ECCD
Shane Donohue, Canterbury Economic
Development
Norman St.Jean, USDA
Ben Bowell, American Farmland Trust
Raymond Covino, NRCS
Jay Mar, NRCS

RC&D Program Update

The National Program has cut staff substantially and is continuing to try and secure funding at the federal level and is also trying to become involved with the newly established rural advisory council.

NRCS Updates

Jay Mar reported that NRCS feels RC&D programs are important and that he will continue to work with RC&D partners and look for opportunities to work together.

Secretary's Report

Discussion concerned a minor attendance change that needed to be made.

Motion: To approve the minutes of 6/13/11 with corrections.

Motion made by: Tom O'Dell

Seconded by: Phil Chester

Voted: Motion passed

Treasurer's Report:

Discussion concerned examination of the year end budget and first month and a half of the current year budget. Farm Energy III was funded at \$75,000 by Rural Development; the 319 Shore Land Protection project has been awarded to Fuss & O'Neal and a kick off meeting will be held in a couple of weeks; The 319 Peat Project awarded for \$70,000 has been signed and is at the Attorney General's Office; Agvocate 2 has been closed out; the Putnam Farmers Market cooperative agreement with NRCS has been closed out.

Motion: To receive the report and place in file.

Motion made by: Tom ODell

Seconded by: Paula Stahl

Voted: Motion passed

Environmental Review Team:

Elaine Sych

They are waiting for reports for Gunther Property and the Ridgefield Ridgebury School outdoor class rooms. Coming to conclusion are Newington's Walk Project, Cedar Mt.. Naugatuck's Long Meadow Pond Brook project should begin in the fall. Phil Miller First Selectman of Essex has mentioned doing a report on the Preserve Property located in Old Saybrook, Essex, and Westbrook. In Scotland, small subdivision with a concerned neighbor, told to get back when the project is with P&Z or Wetlands or to have Conservation District look at it. Surveys for older reports have been sent out and mailings will go to the Land Trust and towns once elections are over. Their quarterly meeting with DEP will be held on August 31st.

Elaine has been helping to get paper work together for the human resource review and it will be handled through the ERT sub-committee. Funding for ERT from DEP is believed to be \$100,000.00 and out of pocket for the remainder, as well as the expenditure for the land use training program of UConn's Community and Natural Resource Planning Program which will be provided this year in the CRERPA region including Haddam and East Haddam and in the central Connecticut area focusing on rural municipalities.

Committee Reports

Agriculture – Phil Chester

The next meeting of the committee should be sometime in September. They have been working on draft regulations for livestock report. The Agvocate program is progressing. Discussion concerned what RC&D could do to move the slaughter house project forward. Perhaps the Council could work with beef and lamb producer to form a collaborative to partner with the facility especially to work on the cut, rap, and pack portion of the production process. Perhaps a Ag viability grant could be applied for.

Greenways – Margot Burns

The last meeting was held the same day and just before this full council meeting. Three items were discussed: The survey of municipal land use commissions concerning the status of greenway planning in the State which will be done in cooperation with CACIWC through their annual conference on November 12th, their news letter, email, and possible online survey using Survey Monkey; a project on the north branch of the Park River and the Annie Fisher School concerning reestablishing an existing nature trail and outdoor classroom area and invasive species control with some of the remaining \$75,000 associated with the Park River greenway project, the project is in need of project coordinator to move forward and; how to make available to non profits and municipalities the three Juno GPS units. Paula Stahl reported that she and Holly Drinkuth are producing a publication concerning greenway, blueway, and wildlife corridor planning.

Livable Communities – Elaine Sych

The last meeting was held on Sept. 28th, 2011 at 10am at Essex Town Hall. The shoreline protection contract has been signed and a meeting will be scheduled. The farm to school survey project contract with the Dept. of Agriculture and Franklin County Community Corporation is

about ready to be signed. The project needs to be completed by Dec. 31, 2011. Elaine Sych will be taking the lead on the project. Chris Donnelly of CT DEEP will be providing information on the America the Beautiful Grant Projects for RC&D websites.

Connecticut Farm Energy Program: Amanda Fargo - Johnson

Connecticut Farm Energy Fair was held July 21, 2011 at Eastern CT State University with 20 + vendors and 75+ ag producers attending. 4 REAP grants were submitted to USDA Rural Development: Stonington Vineyards with an energy efficiency project, Whispering Winds solar project, T&C Greenhouses an energy efficient furnace project, and Historic Cargill Falls Mill on a hydroelectric project. The Connecticut Farm Energy program received funding from a USDA Rural Development RBEG grant to continue the program and in October 2011 it will become a State wide program. Amanda is beginning to plan State wide fall and winter workshops.

New Business:

Shane Donahue, Town of Canterbury Economic Development Commission request for \$1,700.00 of funding for a project to remove garbage from the Quinebaug River.

Motion: To provide \$500.00 in funding to the project 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

Voted: Motion passed.

Town of Old Lyme Conservation Commission request for funding for a sign to be located at Haines Park in Old Lyme in support of its ecological landscape project at the Park and its larger project to promote best landscaping practices concerning water quality.

Motion: To table the request until the next meeting pending information concerning access to the Park. The Council would like to see if the project could be more transferable to other places and to a wider audience and to see exact design for the sign.

Motion made by: Lois Bruinooge

Seconded by: Tom Odell

Voted: Motion passed.

Last Green Valley generously donated a \$500.00 donation to RC&D in honor of Liz Rogers and Norma O'Leary.

Ray Covino of NRCS, request for funding for this year's soil health workshops. This year will be a 3 day program, Nov. 14, 15, & 16th: Livestock, perennial vegetation, and residential landscape.

Motion: To enter into agreement with NRCS to help with administrative details of workshops and to allocate up to \$1,000.00 in project support funds.

Motion made by: Phil Chester

Second by: Paula Stahl

Voted: Motion Passed

Old Business:

Area Plan – Committees need to continue to work on the Area Plan.
Letters of Appointment need to be sent in.

We need to move forward on hiring a part time coordinator.

Motion: To charge the executive board to create a job description for a part time coordinator.

Motion made by: Phil Chester

Seconded by: Tom ODell

Motion: Phil Chester will be submitting a request for funds to support strategic planning for the council to the Hartford Foundation for Giving.

Motion made by: Phil Chester

Seconded by: Paula Stahl

Motion Passed.

Partner Updates:

NRCS – Ray Covino

Claims for discrimination update.

Celebrating Agriculture will be held Sept. 24th.

American Farmland Trust - Working Lands Alliance – Ben Bowell

Sundae at the Farm fund raiser will be held in Lebanon.

Council on Soil and Water

Last meeting held in July. The Council is waiting to hear on State funding outcome. Voted to support a match for an equine future funds grant.

Connecticut Coastal Conservation District

Annual swallow cruise Sept. 17th, 2011.

RC&D invited to NRCS State Technical Meeting on August 17th, 2011 at UConn.

Application deadline for NRCS conservation and easement program is Oct. 7th.

The next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 24th, 2011.

Motion: To adjourn meeting at 2:00pm

Motion made by: Phil Chester

Second: Tom ODell