



Connecticut RC&D

Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc.
24 Hyde Avenue, Vernon CT 06066 * (860) 373-7408 *



John Guskowski, President
John Weedon, Vice President
Barbara Kelly, Treasurer
Margot Burns, Secretary

Meeting Minutes December 13th, 2016, 2:30pm – 4:00pm UConn Extension Service 1066 Saybrook Road, Haddam, CT

Board Members in Attendance: John Guskowski, Margot Burns, John Weedon, Lois Bruinooge, Aaron Budris, Barbara Kelly, Jim Larkin, Lynne Pike DiSanto, Jim Costello, Jim Sipperly

Board Members not in Attendance Matt Fulda, Sal Decarli, Mark Goetz

Other Attendees: Jeanne Davies, Amanda Fargo-Johnson, Tom Morgart, Rebecca Andreucci, Dan Mullins

John Guskowski called the meeting to order at 2:40pm. He reported that he was elected the New England's representative to the National RC&D board.

Secretary's Report

Motion: To accept the meeting minutes of 9/20/16.

Motion made by: John Weedon

Seconded by: Jim Costello

Voted: Motion approved unanimously.

Treasure's Report: Barbara Kelly presented the profit & loss statement.

Motion: To receive the profit and loss as presented.

Motion made by: John Weedon

Seconded by: Jim Sipperly

Voted: Motion approved unanimously.

Agenda items 10 and 11 unanimously moved on agenda to after Treasure's Report.

Motion: To authorize John Guskowski to extend lease with UConn at current price and specifications and to endorse nondiscrimination clause and lease extension with a 30 day notification to terminate.

Motion made by: Jim Costello

Seconded by: Jim Sipperly

Voted: Motion approved unanimously.

By Laws Revisions:

Discussion concerned questioning why only 4 other organizations as board additions, and questions concerning the role of Council of Governments. By law revision will be kept on agenda through the end of the fiscal year to be voted on at the next annual meeting. Article VI needed to be changed to reflect the ability of the Executive Director to be one of the 2 signatures required on checks voted on at a previous meeting.

Motion: To amend section VI of the bylaws to reflect that the Executive Director is able to be one of the 2 signatures required on checks.

Motion made by: Lois Bruinooge

Seconded by: Jim Costello

Voted: Unanimously

Personal Policy Revision:

Motion: To accept revisions to personnel policy made by Jeanne and okayed by RC&D legal counsel **Richard Roberts of Halloran & Sage.**

Motion made by: John Weedon

Seconded by: Barbara Kelly

Voted: Motion approved unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Jeanne - Executive Director:

Jeanne would like to develop a template agreement for the Agviability grant program. RC&D has applied for an FSA educational needs assessment grant for land use commissions and development of a geospatial agricultural data set for \$75,000, \$45,000 would be for a consultant. Jeanne is talking with CCAPA and Main St. about possible rural planning initiatives. Jeanne attended the Greening Greenfield conference. Some ideas that came from the conference dealt with transit for rural areas and how to engage youth. Partnership Outreach included the NAACP and Center for Latino Progress

Amanda – Agricultural Programs:

Agvocate: Continue to provide assistance to farms in the Thames River Watershed via TLGV RCPP Agreement with NRCS. Assisted Hillside Farm, Mansfield, CT and 87 acres were approved and enrolled in EQIP for cover crop implementation. Monthly emailing of Agvocate newsletter (600 + recipients)

Grants:

Re-applied to USDA FSA Grant –Farm Startup Express (\$88,000.00 request)

Applied for USDA NRCS - CIG Grant to purchase Soil Health Equipment for organic farmers to implement no-till and cover crops, awaiting announcement (\$75,000.00 request)

Applied to CT Department of Agriculture to update Livestock Zoning and Ordinance Guide (2012) and create protocol for AG Geospatial dataset. (\$45,000.00 request)

April 30, 2016 USDA REAP Grants:

In total 7Applications for farms located in Fairfield, New Haven, New London, and Litchfield County were funded. Meadow Ridge Farm, Howling Flat Farm, Hamlet Hill Farm, Co-AG Farm, Cato Corner Farm, Gilbertie’s Herb Farm, and Prides Corner Farm.

\$361,493.00 in total was received for April 2016 REAP Grants, which will equal another 1.4 million in energy projects on farms in CT. To date CFEP has helped secure 1.9 million in REAP grants, when leveraged equals 7.6 million in energy projects since 2010.

October 30, 2016 USDA REAP Grants:

In total 5 Applications for farms located in New London and Litchfield County were submitted. The 6th applicant farm decided to withhold their application from October and apply in March 2017.

CFEP provided technical assistance in applying for: *Restricted Funds* (asking for 20k or less) \$50,628.00 was requested for 5 projects consisting of 4 solar and 1 energy efficiency. Announcements expected at the end of December 2016.

Next USDA REAP Deadlines: March 31, 2017. CFEP is currently assisting 5+ farms with applying for these upcoming deadlines to USDA Rural Development.

CT Farm Energy/Projects & Outreach - October & November 2016:

- CT Energy Efficiency Board member and C&I Sub-committee participation monthly.
- Co-Host with Energize CT and USDA NRCS partner farm energy round table meeting at the NRCS State Office. (09/20/16)
- Witness at Griswold ZBA Meeting with regards to farm solar project on agenda (10/05/16)
- Presenter & Exhibitor at the Regional Farm and Business Energy Expo (10/20/16)
- Farm Energy Programs featured in the CT Department of AG weekly Agricultural Report (10/25/16)
- Co-Host with UConn and Energize CT – Energy Incentives for CT Farms & Robotics Workshop at TAC (10/26/16).
- Meet with and provide technical assistance to farms to develop their October 2016 & March 2017 REAP grant applications.
- Meeting with Sustainable CT & UConn NEMO about solar siting (11/07/16).
- Farm Energy Video Development Meeting with UConn for 4 CFEP projects having received a REAP grant (11/09/16)
- Attended Working Lands Alliance Annual Meeting at the Capitol in Hartford, CT (11/16/16)
- Exhibitor at Annual CT Farm Bureau Meeting in N. Haven, CT (11/18/16)
- Provide assistance to DEEP Commissioner staff on siting solar seeting being planned for January 2017.
- Continue partnership for farm assessments with CCAT and RiverCOG.

Soil Health:

Fall Organic Options for Soil Health Workshop held on November 2, 2016 hosted at Massaro Farm in Woodbridge, CT. Co-hosts included CT NOFA and NE SARE. 53 Registered for the event.

Current NRCS Agreement:

Extension Request Approved -until 12/31/16

Future NRCS Agreement:

Grant approved for \$15,000.00 to continue Soil Health Education and Training into 2017-2018.

Next up: Spring 2017 Workshop - Dairy Farm Options for Soil Health Workshop hosted in partnership with NE SARE Grant in Eastern, CT.

Environmental Programs -

General Programing:

New England RCPP –Potential Partnership for Agriculture-Conservation Education – evolving.
Developing database of colleges and programs – with conservation and environmental programs for future partnership opportunities. Drafting for ERT Revamp for Spring.

Completed Environmental Reviews

Andrew Mountain Road Open Space – Naugatuck.

Team Members:

- Randy Steinen -Geologist
- Cordalie Benoit –CT Community Garden Association
- Pat Bisacky –DPH
- Aaron Budris –COG CNV
- Eric Lindquist –CTOPM
- Chris Allan –Soils –LandTech
- Brian Jones –State Archeology
- Jerry Milne –State Forester –CTDEEP
- Peter Picone –Wildlife Biologist –CTDEEP

Current Environmental Review

Avalonia Land Conservancy - Kendall Property –Preston.

Open Space Acquisition Grant –January 2017

Team Members:

- Dennis Quinn -Herpetologist
- Edward Pawlak –Soil Scientist
- Kate Rattan –SECOG
- Kip Kolesinskis –Agriculture –Soil Conservation
- Randy Steinen –Geologist
- Brian Jones –State Archaeology
- Charlotte Pyle –Landscape Ecologist

New England Farm Energy Collaborative:

Discussion: Administration of the New England Farm Energy Collaborative was taken over by the Massachusetts based Center for Ecotechnology. Amanda recommended that RC&D pursue bringing back the Collaborative to CT RC&D.

Motion: To allow staff to pursue bringing back the administration of the New England Farm Energy Collaborative to CT RC&D.

Motion made by: Jim Sipperly

Seconded by: Barbara Kelly

Voted: Motion approved unanimously.

Committees:

A Mission, Marketing, and Membership Committee(s) will be forming as well as a committee for hiring of staff for the NRCS initiative.

Other Business:

Jeanne will be putting together a RBDG grant for a small rural business incubator center. There will be a call concerning this grant opportunity on Jan. 5th, 2017.

The next RC&D full council meeting will be held Feb. 21st, 2017 at a yet to be determined location in western CT.

Partner Updates:

- Naugatuck Valley COG – Currently working on a state wide multiuse trail study.
- NRCS – State dairy summit Jan. 3rd.
- Ct River Coastal Conservation District – Installation of Clinton Fish Ladder.
- North Central Conservation District – Working on town reviews and farmland restoration. A note that the Enviro-thon is in trouble and has no funding this year.
- Southeastern Council of Governments – Working on resiliency grant – development of a tool for the development of green infrastructure.
- Lower Ct River Valley COG – Resiliency grant for the development of flood susceptibility maps.

Motion: To adjourn meeting at 4:19

Motion made by: Barbara Kelly

Seconded by: Jim Costello

Voted: Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Margot Burns, Secretary