



CONNECTICUT

RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT
1066 Saybrook Road
Haddam, Connecticut 06438

John Guszowski, President
Judy Rondeau, Vice President
Barbara Kelly, Treasurer
Margot Burns, Secretary

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday 5/21/19, 12:30 – 3:00
Lower Ct River Valley Council of Governments
145 Dennison Rd., Essex, CT

Board Members in Attendance: John Guszowski, Margot Burns, Mark Goetz, Judy Rondeau, Lynne Pike DiSanto, and Lois Bruinooge. From the phone for a limited time, Rosa Browne, Aaron Budris, and Jim Sipperly.

Board Members not in Attendance: Justin LaFountain, Jim Costello, Matt Fulda, Mark Nielsen, Jim Larkin, Rebecca Andreucci, Joanna Shapiro, Rick Huntley.

Other: Jeanne Davies, Amanda Fargo-Johnson, Andrea Peres, Riley Doherty, Iredia Ohenhen, Megan McClellan, Melissa Hunt, Tom Morgart, Lillian Ruiz and Sven Pihl (online).

John Guszowski called the meeting to order at 12:35pm and noted that there was a quorum.

Secretary's Report:

Motion: To accept the 1/15/19, 2/27/19, and 3/26/19 meeting minutes as presented with edits from Lynn Pike DiSanto that include her being present on the 1/15/19 call and not abstaining on 2/27/19.

Motion made by: Lynne Pike DiSanto

Seconded by: Judy Rondeau

Voted: Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Directors Report:

Jeanne informed the board that we will have to apply through a competitive grant program to continue the Job Jump Start Program with USDA NRCS. The current program ends in Sept. 2019.

Motion: To move forward with an application to continue the program and submit a proposal to USDA NRCS.

Motion made by: Lois Bruinooge

Seconded by: Lynne Pike DiSanto

Voted: Motion passed unanimously.

Staff is working to produce our 1st edition of Cultivate Connecticut and hope to have it out by September 1st. The draft budget was discussed. Executive Committee would like to recommend health insurance or stipend for full time staff, we will be receiving a portion of the funds left over from the dissolution of the New England region RC&D committee funds and will use it to join the Mid-Atlantic region, Mid-Atlantic RC&D conference will take place in Delaware, October 2019. There is no national RC&D conference this year. John would like to see the line item for legal fees increased.

There was consensus for the budget as discussed to be presented at the annual meeting. The annual work plan was discussed and edits offered. There was consensus for it to be presented at the annual meeting.

Draft bylaws were presented for comment and discussion. Discussion included retaining Council of Governments and Conservation District representatives must be staff or a member of the board.

Motion: To accept the bylaws as presented with the change that Council of Governments and Conservation District representatives must be staff, or a member of the board and they will be effective October 1, 2019.

Motion made by: Jim Sipperly

Seconded by: Lois Bruinooge

Voted: Motion passed unanimously.

Rosa Brown left at 1:40. No longer a quorum present.

Jeanne discussed the nominations for awards at the annual meeting and that the council should send in their votes. We had received 4 scholarship applications for the agricultural scholarship and 4 for the conservation scholarship. Jeanne asked for volunteers to be on a scholarship recipient selection committee.

Our annual meeting and the Rural Lands/Rural Towns conference will be held on June 13, 2019 at Heartstone Farm and Winery in Columbia, CT.

Partners Update:

NRCS – Tom Morgart reported on the research that had been done on eastern CT forests and that it has been estimated that there are 8 million dead trees. Safety is a concern for public recreation areas and for forest fires. Forest land owners that apply for EQUIP funding need to have a forest management plan.

Soil & Water – There is an upcoming NE region conservation district conference coming up at the end of August 2019 to take place in CT at Foxwoods. The SW conservation district is looking for a new Executive Director. The conservation districts are thankful and happy for the funding they received through RC&D.

CFPA – They are participating in the update and community outreach of the state’s forest action plan.

Last Green Valley – They are celebrating their 25th anniversary of the Heritage Corridor.

Agricultural Program Updates:

USDA Rural Development RBDG Grant Work, CFEP assisted 7 farms with the April 1, 2019 USDA Rural Development – REAP Deadline. Currently working with farms to provide technical assistance for the next REAP grant deadline, October 31, 2019.

Edits for 3rd edition of the CT Farm Energy BMP Guide, continue kick off of “FarmUP” program, CT Energy Efficiency Board Participation as interim Chair and Committees.

REAP Grant Projects Completed:

- Steadfast Farm, Bethlehem, CT
- Sun One Organic Farm, Bethlehem, CT

CT DOAG Grant – Continue to work on Livestock Guide updates with CT Farm Bureau and working on Ag GIS with MetroCOG.

DEEP/SEP #2 Grant – Completed a 750 piece info mailing to farms in the CRCOG region and the grant was completed on 3/31/19.

Soil Health Initiative – Plan upcoming soil health workshop on silvopasture and agroforestry to take place on August 14, 2019 at Hidden Blossom Farm, Union, CT and work with CT DEEP staff and partners to plan a compost workshop for the fall/winter of 2019.

SCRCOG Grant – 250-piece mailing of information to farms in the SCRCOG region and filming of education videos at Trifecta Ecosystems, Massaro Community Farm, and Bishop’s Orchards.

Advocate Program – held on March 28, 2019 “Growing Non-Traditional Crops in CT” workshop in Lebanon, CT in conjunction with partners – 150+ attendees.

CIG No-Till/Cover Crop Hubs – Created a CIG Manual, contact list, assisted farms with online calendar and usage, Fort Hill Farms in New Milford, CT joined the Sub Edge Farm Equipment Hub, and there is to be a field day hosted in partnership with the CT NOFA at Sub Edge Farm in the fall of 2019.

REDA #1 Geothermal Pilot Project – to date 12 Farms have been provided with a Geothermal Assessment Report from Litchfield Geothermal (Contractor for the project) and there are 6 more still available.

REDA #2 Energy Audit Project – the project started May 1, 2019, contracts signed with EnSave the audit contractor. There will be a kick off meeting with USDA Rural Development staff and applications and handout materials will be developed.

ERT Program:

Active ERT’s – Durham open space plan, Bloomfield / University of Hartford North Property Resource Inventory, Hydrilla survey and study Lower Ct River municipalities – RiverCOG, Air Line Trail State Park.

Tour de Farms:

The tour will begin and end at Woodstock Fair Grounds with 16 and 38 mile loops on AG Day. Staff is starting to look at sponsorships. Parking will be available in the field at Fairvue Farms.

CACEE Project:

Haddam received a small brownfield grant for the property and there is interest from the Haddam Bulletin for an article about RC&D.

Partners to Programs:

The first meeting was fairly successful and there is thought about doing another program in the fall of 2019.

Meeting adjourned at 2:35

Respectfully submitted,
Margot Burns, Secretary