



CONNECTICUT

RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

1066 Saybrook Road

Haddam, Connecticut 06438

John Guszowski, President
Judy Rondeau, Vice President
Treasurer, Justin LaFountain
Margot Burns, Secretary

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday 05/05/20, 9:00 – 11:00
Conference Call

Board Members in Attendance: John Guskowski, Lois Bruinooge, Chris Sullivan, Margot Burns, Judy Rondeau (joined 9:55), Lynne Pike DiSanto, Rosa Browne, Joanna Shapiro, Rick Huntley, Aaron Budris, Rebecca Andreucci, Justin LaFountain

Board Members not in Attendance: Matt Fulda, Mark Nielsen, Jim Larkin, Mark Goetz, Jim Costello, Briana DeVivo, Jim Sipperly, Lillian Ruiz

Other: Jeanne Davies; Amanda Fargo Johnson, Jane Flynn, Jillian Shea, Kip Kolesinskas, Tom Morgart, Rebecca Dahl, Joan Nichols

John Guskowski called the meeting to order at 9:03 am and discussed the format of the upcoming Annual Meeting. Discussion centered around the idea of having another partnership meeting like the one held in March of 2019. Due to Covid 19 it would need to be a virtual meeting.

Secretary's Report:

Motion: To approve the minutes 3/12/20.

Motion made by: Rick Huntley

Seconded by: Rosa Browne

Voted: Motion passed. Chris Sullivan and Justin LaFountain abstained and John Guskowski did not vote.

Presidents Report:

John Guskowski commended the work of the staff and the excellent work done for the REAP Grants, Airline Trail Study, and Ag Viability Report.

Financial Report:

We received some small donations as well as a \$2,500 dollar donation. Discussion concerned the need to lower our indirect cost ratio which is currently at 40%. Jeanne applied for and received a payroll

protection loan available to nonprofits because of Covid 19. The loan amount is for \$77,900 and 75% must be used to retain staff and 25% can go towards rent.

Partners Update:

SCCD is working on a watershed based plan for the Mill and Farm(?) River.

RiverCOG is working on their Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

NRCS has 1 staff in their field offices.

NVCOG working on the state trail census. Trail usage has been up 200%. They are also working on their Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.

NCCD held their plant sale as a pre-order and pick up event. They have hired 1 new fulltime staff person Mindy Gosselin and they are working on a Park River project with Kip Kolesinskas.

Working Lands Alliance working on farm preservation and viability, state legislation for dairy farm preservation and land access report. Also working with GC3 working group.

Farm Bureau currently working on food system work and dairy farm preservation and will be doing an update to their 490 guide.

CLCC annual conference was cancelled and they have gone to a virtual platform.

Last Green Valley is encouraging use of land trust trails and farm and ag businesses. They have received Terra Corp staff whose work will focus on urban areas.

2020-2021 Strategic Plan Update:

Jeanne asked the Council to review what she had sent and comment by email. She also reported that the June meeting will be held a virtual meeting on June 4th and will follow the existing partners to programs format.

CTRC&D Projects Reports:

Amanda – Agricultural Programs

-CT Farm Energy Program

11 farms interested in applying for USDA RD REAP grants for the March 31, 2020 deadline which got extended to April 15, 2020. One farm decided to not apply til 2021, three others were not able to proceed with applying due to Covid 19. In total we assisted 7 farms with applying for \$426,741 in REAP grants for \$5,982,427 of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. CT Geothermal Pilot Project - is currently on hold because of Covid 19 due to the contractor not being able to go on site of farms and complete assessments. CT Farm Energy Audit Program - is currently on hold because of Covid 19 due to the contractor not being able to go on site of farms and complete assessments. -No-till / Cover Crop equipment Hub Program - 3rd and final season of the pilot project. Muddy Roots recently joined the western equipment hub, that brings the total to 4 farms in the western hub and 5 farms in the eastern equipment hub. As part of the project we were scheduled to hold a second farm field day in the fall like we did last year at Sub Edge Farm but this year in eastern CT. Due to Covid 19 we are looking into our options to film a farmer education video with UConn Ext in place of in person, showing the equipment being used at various farms participating in the hubs.

- Soil Health Initiative - Due to Covid 19 the Compost Conference scheduled for March 2020 was cancelled. The planning committee met last week and discussed options going forward and decided to work on creating a compost webinar series to be hosted with partners starting in the fall of 2020.

- SCRCOG Greater New Haven Project - recently finished. More information about the project and deliverables achieved in the final plan report to be submitted to CT DOAG and will be available on the CT RC&D website shortly.

-Future projects for CT RC&D agricultural programs include the potential to expand the no-till /cover crop equipment project, CT Grains equipment coop for farms, and work around biochar.

Ground Breaker Program: Youth education in soil health careers has its interns on board.

Tour de Farms will be a virtual program with routes to publicize farms. Donations will be used to provide food for local food pantries.

ERT Program: Curtis Woodlands waiting on invasive plant report and there will be a workshop concerning the 12 town Ct River aquatic invasive species project.

Final discussion centered around food system security, emergency planning for farmers, and how to teach people to grow their own food.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:53

Respectfully submitted,
Margot Burns, Secretary