

Franklin Agriculture and Conservation Commission

FRANKLIN TOWN HALL

7 Meetinghouse Hill Rd.

Franklin, Connecticut

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, February 16, 2017

7:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order: Chairperson Susan Allen called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m.

Members Present: Chairperson Susan Allen, Vice Chair Alan Holmberg, Gail Miller, Craig Staebner.

Members Absent: Peter Calvert. **Alternate Member Present:** Roland Mihok.

Alternate Member Absent: Chester Rynaski.

Mr. Mihok was seated as a voting member.

2. Recognition of Visitors and Initial Inquiries: None

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. December 15, 2016:

MOTION #1: made by Craig Staebner SECONDED BY Alan Holmberg that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission approves the meeting minutes of December 15, 2016 - as amended:

1. Old Business 6.b. Locally Important Soils in Franklin: Beginning of first sentence to read:

“First Selectman **has developed** a list of local important farmland soils.....”

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

4. Call for Additional Agenda Items: New Business: Add – 7.i. Plan of Conservation and Development.

5. Correspondence: The Budget was submitted for review (voted on at last meeting).

6. Old Business:

- a. **COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP:** There was review of memberships, terms, appointments, and potential resignations.

- b. **490 PROGRAM:** There was review of local properties and potential 490 program eligibility, grand list/tax rates, the application process, and classification identification values.

7. New Business:

- a. **FARM BUREAU PROGRAMS:** Mr. Holmberg updated those in attendance about the recent meeting held at the Franklin Fire House. There were approximately 30 attendees. Topics of discussion included, but were not limited to, limited liabilities, agriculturism, farm programs that involve the public such as education programs utilizing a corn maze, farm tours, proper hand washing requirements, and a Farm Bureau Sponsored Program titled “Protecting your Farm Assets”.

- b. **AGRICULTURE IN FRANKLIN:** There was review of a local company involved with grape seed extraction and the potential for the planting of additional grapes on the property related to future growth, interest shown for a shrimp growing facility, and also the installation of solar panels at Hillendale Egg Farm.

- c. **PELTIER LAND:** There was review of the Peltier land. Approximately 62 acres with 31.4 in Sprague and 20 in Franklin. The Town of Sprague has submitted a grant proposal to DEEP for the Peltier property.
 - d. **FRANKLIN CONSERVATION EFFORTS:** There was discussion about the McCullan property at the end of Pleasure Hill Road.
 - e. **USDA'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE \$255 MILLION FARM BILL PROGRAM:** There was discussion on a publicized possible Farm Bill. The Last Green Valley has been awarded funds but specific distribution is not known at this time.
 - 1. **Healthy Forest:** Provides technical assistance to people with stewardship plans. Obtain land protected in terms of selling development rights. Some costs of appraisals are offset and paid for such as appraisals and A2 surveys.
 - 2. **Environmental Quality:** Helping with the control of environmental quality is the Natural Conservation Service within the Department of Interior connected by the Agricultural Bill and Farm Bill. There is an effort to protect water in Rhode Island Sound. The Last Green Valley is to produce a budget that gets approved by State (NRCS) and then federal money can be released and distributed to programs. There will be no grants.
 - f. **LANVRIN SISTER'S \$16 MILLION CT BIRDS, ANIMALS, AND NATURE:** Discussed the donation of 8 Million Dollars for Connecticut Birds and Nature.
 - g. **LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION ACT 16-1: RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE TO PROTECT REAL PROPERTY HELD OR CONTROLLED BY THE STATE:** "The general assembly shall not enact any legislation requiring a state agency to sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of any real property or interest in real property that is in the custody or control of such agency to any person or entity other than another state agency unless 1. the general assembly has held a public hearing regarding such property or interest, and 2. the sale, transfer or disposition is required by an act of the general assembly that is limited in subject matter to provisions concerning such sale, transfer or disposition and passed by a yea vote of at least two-thirds of the membership of each house"
 - h. **VOLUNTARY MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE FUNDING PROPOSAL:** This is voluntary and Towns are not required to participate. You can add a fee for land transactions and put money aside for open space.
 - i. **PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT [POCD]:** Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments is in the process of amending the POCD. One major topic is that the population is aging and not being replenished.
8. **GENERAL COMMENTS:** None
9. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None
10. **ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION #3: made by Roland Mihok SECONDED BY Craig Staebner that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

Respectfully submitted, *Sherry Pollard*

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