

Franklin Agriculture and Conservation Commission

FRANKLIN TOWN HALL

7 Meetinghouse Hill Rd.

Franklin, Connecticut

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, January 17, 2019

7:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order: Chairperson Susan Allen called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Members Present: Chairperson Susan Allen, Vice Chair Alan Holmberg, and Craig Staebner. **Members Absent:** Gail Miller. **Alternate Member Present:** Roland Mihok. **Alternate Members Absent** Chester Rynaski. Mr. Mihok was seated as a voting member for Gail Miller.

2. Recognition of Visitors and Initial Inquiries: None.

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. December 20, 2018:

MOTION #1 (1.17.19): made by Roland Mihok SECONDED BY Craig Staebner that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission approves the Minutes of December 20, 2018 as amended:

1. Item 6c: Replace "Congress" with Connecticut State Legislature
 2. Item 7d: Replace first sentence to read "Gail Miller discussed recent activities associated to the ongoing bi-annual stream walks."
 3. Item 7e: Replace first sentence to read "There was a review of the fact that the NW Corner Marker marks the proper area of the original nine-mile square of Norwich that Mohegan Chief, Uncas, gave to Colonial Connecticut. Franklin, known then as West Farms, used to be part of Norwich."

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

4. Call for Additional Agenda Items: None.

5. Correspondence: None

6. Old Business:

- a. **AG-CON BUDGET:** Amounts were voted upon at the previous meeting. Request sheets were read aloud and then submitted.
 - b. **BIODIVERSITY STREAM TESTING:** Members thanked Gail Miller for her presentation and content. The presentation was then discussed. Members discussed the Eastern CT Conservation District and Jean Pillo, Watershed Conservation Coordinator.
 - c. **NW MARKER HISTORIC ROAD & FOUNDATIONS:** Susan Allen recently spoke with the Franklin Zoning Chairman to reiterate concerns of a possible upcoming sand & gravel operation in this immediate area and that there must be great care taken because of archaeological sites. At this point, there are no PZC applications for a sand & gravel operations.

- d. **UPDATE FRANKLIN HILLS GOLF COURSE:** It was noted Franklin Hills Estates & Country Club intends to begin the land use permitting process again with the Town. AgCon will manage the golf course's conservation easements.

7. New Business:

- a. **RESULTS JANUARY 12TH BALD EAGLE COUNT:** Discussion took place about this annual event co-sponsored by CT DEEP, Audubon, and the Last Green Valley. There were sightings reported from the Last Green Valley Towns. Again this year, volunteer, Susan Allen sighted a mature bird at the Konow Trout and Salmon Camp in Franklin/Sprague.
- b. **FARM BUREAU:** Next Friday, January 25th, the New London County Chapter of the Farm Bureau will hold its Annual Legislative Dinner at the Lebanon Congregational Church Hall. Farm Bureau members will state their issues of concern including: 1) making sure funding is in place to keep CT Department of Agriculture as a stand-alone department; 2) making sure the Community Investment Act will continue to be funded; 3) keeping PA 490 in place; 4) funding Agricultural Stations around the state; and 5) passing legislation strengthening Hemp farmers. Mr. Staebner continued discussion on the Hemp issue and mentioned it has medicinal purposes (CBD). There are also concerns about recent legislative actions about legalizing recreational marijuana.
- c. **LAND CONSERVATION EFFORTS: PELTIER, MOREHOUSE, MCCALLUM:** Discussion took place about recent grant activity associated to funds being raised to purchase the 66 acre Peltier property on the western side of the Shetucket and the Morehouse property on the east side of the river. There is nothing new to report on with the McCallum property.

8. **GENERAL COMMENTS:** 1) Cathy Osten, First Selectman of Sprague, is looking for bees for the Sprague Land Preserve. Alan Holmberg, bee keeper, was asked to give it some thought. It was noted there are some concerns with terrain (mostly woods but some large fields); 2) Roland Mihok stated he had recently retrieved the historic 3-mile marker from the State of CT DOT garage in Norwich. The historic marker was located along Route 32 but was moved during construction so that it would not get damaged. The marker belongs to the Highway Department, however due to its historic value, DOT agreed to allow Franklin Historical Society to temporarily hold it for safe keeping. After the sewer project is complete, a meeting will be held to choose an appropriate location for the marker; and 3) Discussion ensued about the Franklin Water and Sewer project.

9. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

10. **ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION #2 (1.17.19): made by Craig Staebner SECONDED BY Alan Holmberg that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Allen and Sherry Pollard