

Franklin Agriculture and Conservation Commission

FRANKLIN TOWN HALL
7 Meetinghouse Hill Rd.
Franklin, Connecticut

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, June 15, 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, Gail Miller, Craig Staebner. **Members Absent:** Vice Chair Alan Holmberg. **Alternate Members Present:** Roland Mihok, Chester Rynaski.
Mr. Mihok and Mr. Rynaski were seated as a voting member.

2. Recognition of Visitors and Initial Inquiries: Irene Morgan and Matt Staebner.

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. February 16, 2017: Minutes will be included in the Next Meeting packet.

4. Call for Additional Agenda Items: None

5. Correspondence:

6. Old Business:

- a. **GRAPE SEED EXTRACT TOUR:** It was noted, the tour will not happen for about one year as this operation is in its infancy stage. The plan is to begin growing grapes, crush grapes, and extract skins, pulp and seeds via a mechanical process. The pulp and skin is proposed to be sold while the seeds will be separated for their harvested nutrient value and sold commercially.
 - b. **CONSERVATION EFFORTS:** The Robinson property has been purchased. Additional property may become available for sale at the end of Pautipaug Hill. Abutting property in this area contains a large amount of acreage and a spring fed pond. Properties in this area about the Sprague land preserve.
 - c. **SIGN:** Susan presented the idea that a sign be erected on the Robinson Property giving credit to those who donated their time and efforts.

7. New Business:

- a. **COMMUNITY GARDEN/THE HUB:** This project will be re-scheduled sometime during the fall season.
 - b. **AGRI-TOURISM IN FRANKLIN (OLD MUSHROOM FARM):** Susan reported on a presentation made by KBEST to the Planning & Zoning Commission about business plans for property located at the old mushroom farm. KBEST representatives explained associated Agri-tourism possibilities with their business. An overall conceptual concept involves creating a tourism base in this area by building a hotel on site, providing wine tasting tours, bread and cheese tasting tours, and shrimp tasting tours along with the ability to purchase these items. These activities will be connected with all other attractions in this area including the casinos.

- c. **FRACKING:** The Commission held discussion on analyzing the activity of fracking. Some Towns in the area have banned fracking such as, Lebanon, Griswold, and Hampton.
- **Hydraulic Fracturing** (also fracking, fraccing, frac'ing, hydrofracturing or hydrofracking) is a well stimulation technique in which rock is fractured by a pressurized liquid. The process involves the high-pressure injection of 'fracking fluid' (primarily water, containing sand or other proppants suspended with the aid of thickening agents) into a wellbore to create cracks in the deep-rock formations through which natural gas, petroleum, and brine will flow more freely. When the hydraulic pressure is removed from the well, small grains of hydraulic fracturing proppants (either sand or aluminium oxide) hold the fractures open
 - **Hydraulic Fracturing** is highly controversial in many countries. Its proponents advocate the economic benefits of more extensively accessible hydrocarbons.^{[6][7]} Opponents argue that these are outweighed by the potential environmental impacts, which include risks of ground and water contamination, air and noise pollution, and the triggering of earthquakes, along with the consequential hazards to public health and the environment.

It was clarified fracking requires a local sewer treatment plant in order to perform the processed of breaking down materials in order to extract portions for discard. The Town of Franklin does not have a plant so this would not take place.

- d. **FARM LAND TO SOLAR PANELS:** There was discussion about utilizing the McCullan property at the end of Pleasure Hill Road for solar power.
- e. **SHETUCKET RIVER NATIONAL RECREATIONAL WATER TRAIL:** Discussion took place about legislative and publicized activities regarding a possible Farm Bill. The Last Green Valley has been awarded funds but specific distribution is not known at this time.
- f. **PROTECT STATE-OWNED PUBLIC LANDS:** Discussion took place about a recent anonymous donation of 8 Million Dollars for Connecticut Birds and Nature.

8. **GENERAL COMMENTS:** None

9. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

10. **ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION #1: 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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