

Franklin Agriculture and Conservation Commission

FRANKLIN TOWN HALL

7 Meetinghouse Hill Rd.

Franklin, Connecticut

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, January 18, 2018

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. **Members Absent:** Gail Miller, Craig Staebner. **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:

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. November 16, 2017:

MOTION #1 (01-18-18): made by Alan Holmberg SECONDED BY Roland Mihok that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission approves the Minutes of November 16, 2017 as presented

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

4. Call for Additional Agenda Items: None

5. Correspondence: None

6. Old Business:

- a. **2018 CALENDAR:** Copy of approved 2018 Calendar will be sent to Gail Miller.

- b. **CONSERVATION EFFORTS:** Towns of Franklin and Sprague are working together to raise money for an option for acquisition of property related to the Bombaro property. Grant has been received from DEEP. In addition, \$40,000 has been raised towards a \$100,000 goal for this option. [See Agenda Item 8c.]

- c. **GRAPE SEED EXTRACT TOUR:** Mike Tules, K-Best Representative, has been invited to come to an AG CON meeting sometime in the future to discuss current plans for this site and their ideas about agri-tourism.

- d. **WINDHAM COUNTY CONSERVATION CONSORTIUM:** Susan Allen was present at the November 29, 2018 Consortium and provided a presentation on current activities. There is an upcoming April 30 2018 meeting. Mr. Eric Hamberlan, President of the Connecticut Forest Park Association. Active in trying to change state constitution – so public hearing is required before state lands are swapped or sold.

- e. **FRANKLIN ESTATES GOLF COURSE:** Gail Miller will provide an update at a future AG CON meeting.

7. New Business:

a. **AG CON BUDGET REQUESTS:**

MOTION #2 (01-18-18): made by Alan Holmberg SECONDED BY Roland Mihok that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission approve the following:

- **Line item 1450.10** Administration \$150.00. Requested for support of admin expense of commission and sponsorship of public programs.

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

MOTION #3 (01-18-18): made by Roland Mihok SECONDED BY Alan Holmberg that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission accept the Budget Proposal

- **Line item 1450.20** Open Space Fund \$100.00. Requested as modest donation to newly open space fund.

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

b. **FARM BUREAU:**

Alan Holmgren reported there was a January 26, 2018 Legislative dinner held at the Lebanon Town Green. State Representatives and Senators from New London County were present. Discussion included, but was not limited to, Farm Bureau legislative priorities, continuation of Community Investment Act, and funding for agriculture experiment station.

c. **LATEST DEEP AWARD – PELTIER:**

During February 2017, DEEP issued approximately \$158,200 in grant funds generated from the Community Investment Act towards the option for acquisition of property related to the Peltier property.

[See Agenda Item 7b.]

- d. **BALD EAGLE SURVEY – 1/13/18 (AUDUBON):** Susan Allen noted an article well written about the Bald Eagle population. Susan Allen was viewing the area near Konow Trout and Salmon Camp for Bald Eagle activity. At this point, no eagles were seen.

e. **CT TRAILS DAY: 6/2 & 6/3/18 (CT FOREST & PARK ASSOCIATION):**

Mr. Eric Hamberlan, President of the Connecticut Forest Park Association, head up the trails program. The program is a very nice activity and trail activities have recently taken place in Bolton, CT., near the Indian caves.

f. **CLCC CONFERENCE 3/17/18 (CT LAND CONSERVATION COUNCIL):**

The 2018 Connecticut Land Conservation Conference will be held Mar 17, 2018. Topic is Conservation Meets Development: The Role of Land Protection in Building Resilient Communities. For more information, Visit - <http://www.ctconservation.org/2018-Conference>

g. **PROTECTING FAMILY FARMS & FORESTS WORKSHOP 1/24/18 (The Last Green Valley)**

Informational workshops on land conservation, including, easements, grants, and the Forest Legacy Program. Sponsored by the Ashford & Willington Conservation Commission, The Last Green Valley, MassConn, and the Connecticut Farmland Trust.

h. SOLAR PANELS (PRIDES CORNER)

A self-sustaining energy supply on the roof over the heads of workers and products in their shipping area were two of the major improvements brought to [Pride's Corner Farms](#), a wholesale plant grower in Lebanon, CT. The 735 solar panels installed on the roofs of open-sided greenhouses built over the shipping area are expected to produce 25-percent of the energy used on the 400-acre farm. The company received about \$600,000 from a [USDA Rural Energy for America Program \(REAP\) grant](#) that encourages renewable energy and energy efficiency investments at farms. Prides Corner Farms' array is an example of a solar installation that takes advantage of a farm's agricultural infrastructure, generating electricity that helps offset costs of production and makes the farm more viable. The solar panels covering the approximately 2-acre concrete shipping pad should produce about 296,600 kilowatts annually, or the equivalent of the electricity it takes to power 27 homes for a year.

9. **GENERAL COMMENTS:** None

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

11. **ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION #4 (01-18-18): made by Roland Mihok SECONDED BY Alan Holmberg that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission adjourn at 8:23 p.m.

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

Respectfully submitted,
Sherry Pollard

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