

Franklin Agriculture and Conservation Commission

FRANKLIN TOWN HALL

7 Meetinghouse Hill Rd.

Franklin, Connecticut

MINUTES (REVISED)

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, May 17, 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, Gail Miller, Craig Staebner.

Alternate Member Present: Roland Mihok. **Alternate Members Absent** Chester Rynaski.

Mr. Mihok was seated as a voting member

2. Recognition of Visitors and Initial Inquiries: None.

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. April 15, 2018:

MOTION #1 (05-17-18): made by Alan Holmberg **SECONDED BY** Gail Miller that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission approves the Minutes of April 15, 2018 as amended:

1. VISITORS: Bob Collins was present
2. CUSHMAN FARM PRESENTATION: Don Smith was in attendance and Mike Curtis was not
3. BEAVER LODGE DAM: Add Fairy Trails as part of hike
4. OLD BUSINESS - b. CONSERVATION EFFORTS UPDATE:
 - a. Town of Franklin did not participate in Bombaro acquisition of property
 - b. Replace first sentence to read: "Town of Sprague is working to raise money for an option for acquisition of property related to the Bombaro property"
5. PELTIER PROPERTY: 51.3 acres NOT 53 acres

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

4. Call for Additional Agenda Items: None

5. Correspondence: None

6. Old Business:

- a. **ANAEROBIC DIGESTER CUSHMAN'S FARM QUANTUM BIOPOWER:** AGCON members reviewed the April 19, 2018 proposal made by Alan Benevides, P.E., L.S.P., Woodard & Curran, Inc., regarding potential for a processing system for an Anaerobic Digester in the Town of Franklin.

MOTION #2 (05-17-18): made by Roland Mihok **SECONDED BY** Alan Holmberg that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission give a positive recommendation for the proposed Anaerobic Digester potential project with conditions:

1. Local farmers shall be given the opportunity to dump waste product first prior to consideration for outside food waste being brought in.
2. Local farmers shall be given the opportunity to provide manure prior to consideration for outside companies (not including waste milk)

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

- b. **PROMOTING AGRICULTURE IN FRANKLIN - CHARLIE GRANT:** Mr. Grant discussed updating the Towns Agricultural Brochure. AGCON members are in favor of gathering information for the Brochure relative to all things agricultural and conservational. Other information in support of local businesses would be arranged by the Board of Selectmen.
- c. **FRANKLIN HIKE AGCON SPONSORED EVENT 4/22/18:** There was an excellent turnout at the Franklin hike event and it was a great success!! Fifty Seven people attended. Brochures were made available and most were taken. The Fairy Trail was especially nice.
- d. **UPDATE CONSERVATION EFFORTS:** Susan gave an update about the Bombaro property located in the Town of Sprague along the Shetucket River encompassing about 97 acres. Money raising efforts for purchase continue. Additionally, there is interest the potential purchase of property across from the Shetucket River.
- e. **WCCC MEETING 4/29/18 ERIC HAMMERLING FROM CT FOREST & PARK ASSOCIATION:** The Bill was passed by both the house and senate to prohibit the State from selling public property without a public hearing process. This subject is considered an amendment to the Constitution and is now on the ballot awaiting action. It will become law if it receives a majority from Connecticut voters in November 2018.
- f. **SJ35 'PUBLIC LANDS' LEGISLATION UPDATE (Passed):** Referenced in 6e.

9. New Business

- a. **AGVOCATE WEBSITE:** Franklin has been approached and asked if the Town would like to put our information on the AgVocate Website. The AgVocate promotes building farm friendly communities, encourages and enables those who are passionate about modern agriculture to discuss the importance of agriculture, food production, and the innovation needed to nourish our growing world.

Susan Allan read the following proposed language into the record: "June 22, 2010 the Town of Franklin voted to create an Agricultural and Conservation Commission [AGCON] to encourage conservation and sustainable use of Franklin resources and to protect and encourage agriculture as an industry and culture in Franklin. Franklin residence have long expressed maintaining the Franklin rural landscape and agriculture heritage is important and therefore AGCON's goals and activities should revolve around these issues. AGCON has accomplished much since inception including creation of an agricultural brochure listing farms in town, a conservation lands pamphlet listing public open space areas, hosted farming related presentations, created an open space fund, promoted farmers market activities, outreached to Franklin Elementary School with several related educational activities such as an Earth Day Assembly, and has donated agricultural books, researched land use maps, sponsored several hikes and tours, and participated in regional issues such as supporting a Connecticut Greenway Designation along the Shetucket River Corridor. The Commission welcomes public comments and looks forward to continuing to serve the cultural and conservation needs of the Town of Franklin"

MOTION #3 (05-17-18): made by Craig Steabner SECONDED BY Alan Holmberg that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission submit the proposed language as stated above to the State AgVocate for posting on their Website

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

- b. **FRANKLIN OPEN SPACE BROCHURE:**

MOTION #4 (05-17-18): made by Roland Mihok SECONDED BY Craig Steabner that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission approve monetary reimbursement from the AGCON budget to Susan Allen for the purchase of brochure materials in the amount of \$36.48

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

- c. **PELTIER PROPERTY FUNDING & PURCHASE PRICE:** Members discussed funding sources, funding amounts, and the selling price of the Peltier property. At this point it is hopeful the selling price will be decreased in order to facilitate a purchase.
- d. **AQUIFUR PROTECTION / WATER ISSUES:** Members discussed the aquifer protection area on the Nassin property. There is a feeling this natural water resource actually belongs to all people within this area. Maps were reviewed depicting this area and discussion took place about the aquifer. It was noted, years ago, Don Aubrey from Towne Engineering, has been communicating with local residents about the area and quality of the aquifer. The Town of Windham has bonding on a project to run water lines to the intersection of Routes 32 and 203 to secure potable water. Testing of ground water around the aquifer area is taking place. The idea is to work towards protection of this aquifer.
- e. **TOXICS ACTION MEETING 5/16/18:** This is being reviewed by an environmental company as related to item d.
- g. **CONSERVATION EASEMENTS FRANKLIN HILLS GOLF COURSE:** It was noted the Planning & Zoning Commission Application / Permit for the Franklin Hills Golf Course expired May 2018. At this point, the project has stopped and if the applicant wishes to move forward a new site plan application must be filed with the Planning & Zoning Commission.
- h. **CT TRAILS DAY 6/2 & 6/3/18 (CT FOREST & PARK ASSOCIATION:** Event is approaching.
- i. **FARM BUREAUS NEWS:**

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture and Small Business Association will be holding a public meeting Tuesday May 22, 2018 in Norwich CT for discussion on legalizing the production of hemp.

9. **GENERAL COMMENTS:** None

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

11. **ADJOURNMENT:**

MOTION #5 (05-17-18): made by Roland Mihok SECONDED BY Alan Holmberg that the Agriculture & Conservation Commission adjourn the meeting

VOICE VOTE: UNANIMOUS;

MOTION CARRIES

Respectfully submitted,
Sherry Pollard

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