

# Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council (CFWDC)



## Minutes for March 19, 2015 Meeting

Council Members Present: Steven Reviczky, Commissioner, Department of Agriculture; Linda Auger, Taylor Brooke Winery ; Jonathan Edwards, Jonathan Edwards Winery; Dr. Frank Ferrandino, CT Agricultural Experiment Station; Jim Frey, Walker Road Vineyard ; Russell Holmberg, Holmberg Orchards; Jamie Jones, Jones Family Farm & Winery; Michelle Niedermeyer, Lost Acres Vineyard.

Council Members Absent: Hilary Crillo, Hopkins Vineyard; Cameron Faustman, Director, Storrs Experiment Station; George Motel, Sunset Meadow Vineyard; Gregory Weidemann, Dean, UConn College of Agriculture.

Other Attendees: Chris Chichester, Sunset Meadow Vineyard; Blaze Faillaci, Dalice Elizabeth Winery; Judy Ferraro, CT Valley Winery; Chris Granger, Land of Nod Winery; Jessica Maloney, Saltwater Farm Vineyard; George Motel IV, Sunset Meadow Vineyard; Mary Lee Wilcox, Dalice Elizabeth Winery; Rebecca Eddy, Linda Piotrowicz, Jane Slupecki and Jaime Smith, Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

### **Call to Order**

Commissioner Reviczky called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m.

### **Meeting Minutes Approval**

Linda Auger made a motion to accept the December 11, 2014 minutes as submitted. Michelle Niedermeyer seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion.

### **Chairman's Report**

Commissioner Reviczky provided an update on the current legislative session. A discussion ensued regarding proposed legislation regarding Community Investment Act funds, which could affect the council's annual funding. Contingency plans to continue the Passport program were discussed.

### **Passport Subcommittee**

Ms. Niedermeyer reported the subcommittee recommended use of the existing cover artwork for the 2015 Passport after considering alternatives. Editing, printing and distribution of the 2015 Passport continues. The subcommittee agreed to prepare information for next council meeting. Members discussed requesting a discount on festival tickets to decrease Passport program expenses.

A question was raised during public comment about why grand prize trips are to Spain, and not somewhere in the US. Council members explained that costs of the Spain trips are more affordable and that survey results have indicated Passport participants like the destination.

### **Big E Subcommittee**

Mr. Jonathan Edwards presented a proposal that he and Keith Bishop developed to create a cooperative arrangement for management and organization of the 2015 Big E booth in the Connecticut Building. A discussion ensued and there was member agreement that this was a good idea. The subcommittee will continue to explore this option.

A recent meeting between the management of the Big E and the Avenue of the State Building stakeholders was discussed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

During the public comment period, a question was asked about the labeling of wines, and how that affected what Connecticut wines could and could not be served during the Big E. It was clarified there are no rules of that nature at this time.

The 2015 Passport production was discussed. Agency staff reported concerns from the public about who can participate in the program. A former Passport Subcommittee member explained during public comment that the original intent was to not complicate the process any more than necessary and it is understood that principals, owners and council members should not participate in the Passport contest.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Reviczky reminded the council about its other responsibilities, which include education, training and outreach. A conversation about ways to increase production, including farm visits and research, ensued. The Specialty Crop Block Grant as a potential funding source was mentioned. Discussion continued about a regional shortage of Cooperative Extension agents. Dr. Ferrandino agreed to present at the June council meeting on research at the Connecticut Experiment Station.

There was a brief discussion on the use of state owned lands to expand production. It was noted that several parcels of state land are leased to farmers, and the Governor’s Council has made this a priority.

**Other Business**

There was no other business and Commissioner Reviczky adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m. The next meeting is June 11, 2015.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jane M. Slupecki  
March 24, 2015