



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Bureau of Agricultural Development & Resource Conservation

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FARMLAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, December 15, 2022

9:00 – 10:30am

BOARD MEEMBERS PRESENT:

- Robin Chesmer (Chairperson), Jiff Martin (Chairperson), Benjamin Freund, Will O'Meara, Joan Nichols, Ellie Angerame, Terry Jones, Elisabeth Moore

DOAG STAFF PRESENT:

- Holly Lalime, Jaime Smith, Cam Weimar, Carole Briggs

PUBLIC PRESENT:

- Chelsea Gazillo

Meeting Called to Order at 9:05AM by Chairperson Jiff Martin

Approve July, August, and September meeting minutes (Jiff Martin):

- Ellie Angerame made a motion to approve the July, August, and September meeting minutes, Joan Nichols seconded the motion. Board voted to approve the meeting minutes.

PDR Programs Report (Cam Weimar):

- There have been three PDR recordings since Thanksgiving (Pesce Farm in Bolton, Gallup Farm 3 in Voluntown, and Hinchey Farm in Columbia). The Department hopes to see two more farms close by end of year
- The Department is still dealing with delays in ACEP ALE funding due to NRCS staffing capacity. The Department is working with NRCS every week to catch up with project approvals
- The Farmland Restoration Grant closed last Friday. Thirty applications were received. DOAG staff are sorting through and preparing to review them now. This year's interest is on par with the interest received over the past three years. Awards will be made in January 2023

DOAG updates on FPP deconstruction/reconstruction and regulations (Jaime Smith)

- The Department is putting a pause on the Community Farms Preservation Program until the regulations are codified
- As a reminder, all incoming applications must first be evaluated for the Tradition Farmland Preservation Program
- The regulations have moved through OPM and are on their way to the Governor's Office. Public comment is suspected to open in January with comments due January 31
- The Department is working with the Comptroller's Office to move from paper PDR checks to electronic money transfers. This adjustment will hopefully speed up the PDR closing process
- Department staff have revised the Farmland Preservation website
- The Department is putting together an advisory group to work through and discuss OPAV, BPS, and PDR subdivision. This is a result of a meeting that occurred with a small group of board members and Department staff on October 31

Discussion/update on meeting with Commissioner Hurlburt

- A select number of board members met with Commissioner, Jaime, and Carole on October 31 to discuss OPAV, BPS, and PDR subdivision
- No concrete resolutions were reached during the meeting
- One of the outcomes of the meeting was to move forward with a "brainstorming session" which will be happening tomorrow with a small number of individuals in the farmland access community

Discuss reorganization of Chair positions and 2023 meeting dates

- Robin Chesmer and Jiff Martin have served as chairs on the board for two years and would like the opportunity to step down and welcome fresh leadership
- The chairperson needs to be the owner/operator of a Connecticut farm
- Potential appointees were discussed among board members
- Joan Nichols made a motion to delay a final decision on chair and vice chair until January 2023. Will O'Meara seconded the motion. Board voted in favor.
- The board decided to meet on the following dates in 2023
 - January 19, February 16, March 16, April 20, May 18, September 21, November 16.
 - Meetings will occur from 9-10:30 on these dates

Public Comment:

- No public comment.

Terry Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Elisabeth Moore seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:42am.