



## 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, May 18, 2023**

**9:00 – 10:30am**

#### **BOARD MEEMBERS PRESENT:**

- Will O’Meara (Chairperson), Jiff Martin (Chairperson), Robin Chesmer, Joan Nichols, Robert Chang, Elisabeth Moore, Benjamin Freund

#### **DOAG STAFF PRESENT:**

- Holly Lalime, Cam Weimar, Jaime Smith

#### **PUBLIC PRESENT:**

Meeting Called to Order at 9:23AM by Chairperson Will O’Meara

#### **Approve April Meeting Minutes:**

- Elisabeth Moore made a motion to approve the April meeting minutes. Robin Chesmer seconded, board voted to approve the meeting minutes.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Comments on OPAV farmer qualifications:**

- Update from New CT Farmer’s Alliance Town Hall re: Commissioner’s response on OPAV.

#### **General recommendations for stewardship staffing :**

- CFT and DoAg co-hold approximately 35-40 easements. NRCS will accept stewardship reports from CFT and vice versa.
- Mass has four full-time stewardship staff members for approximately 900 easements. DoAg has about 400 easements.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Discuss administrative changes to allow easement co-holders to contract services (i.e. appraisals, surveys) with costs reimbursed by DoAg:**

- Allowing easement partners to contract out services saves 2-3 months in the overall preservation timeline. It also allows contractors to get paid in a timely manner and on a flexible schedule.
- Statute language would need to change in order to enable partners to be reimbursed for due diligence costs.
- Can the Department share with the FBAP recommended language to allow this administrative change?

### **Discuss holding a special meeting on policy:**

- Jiff Martin made a motion to schedule a special policy meeting on June 15<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-11:00 at the CT Farm Bureau office in Wethersfield. Robert Chang seconded the motion. Board voted to approve.
- Current list of policy ideas
  - Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAV)
  - Buy Protect Sell (BPS)
  - Urban farmland acquisition (statewide urban land bank)
  - Loan fund for farm acquisition (Delaware's Young Farmers Program)
  - Funding for additional stewardship staffing
  - Allowing third parties to contract PDR services and be reimbursed

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- No public comment

Elisabeth Moore made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Jiff Martin seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:28am.