



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 MEMBERS 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 15th 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.