

CT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FARMLAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

DRAFT Minutes of Meeting
September 10, 2012, 9:45am
CT-DOAg large conference room, Hartford, CT

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman George Hindinger, Joseph Bonelli, Terry Jones, John Guskowski, Robin Chesmer, Jim Krissel, and Ben Freund.

ALSO PRESENT: For the Department – Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky, Director Joseph Dippel, Lance Shannon, Katherine Winslow, and Denise O’Meara; Others – Leah Mayor of Working Lands Alliance, Brian Beisel and Lauren Allard, Legislative Program Review.

I. **Call to Order:**

Chairman Hindinger called the meeting to order at 9:45 am.

II. **Review of June 6, 2012 minutes:**

Chairman Hindinger stated for the record, appreciation for the June Farmland Advisory Board meeting hosted by M & K Dairy and Greywall Farm, Lebanon.

The minutes of the June 6, 2012 meeting of the Farmland Preservation Advisory Board (Board), were distributed and approved (Freund/Guskowski – Unanimous).

III. **Business:**

1. **FLP Program update summary.**

A. Farmland Preservation Program. Director Dippel discussed the status summary handout relating to completed and pending farms for 2012.

B. Community Farms Preservation Program. Agent Winslow discussed the status summary handout relating to cooperative agreements with Municipalities, and farm applications received for the Pilot Community Farms Preservation Program. Agent Winslow indicated that there has been good response to the pilot Program, stating the Agency has received 23 cooperative agreements from Municipalities; and added that 10 farm applications have been received, ranging in size from 21 to 133 acres, for a total of approximately 654 acres.

C. Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program RFP. Agent Winslow indicated that the Agency has put in a request for Federal Funds, to possibly obtain 50% reimbursement, to leverage the allotted CFPP pilot program funding of the two million bond fund allocation. Winslow indicated USDA has conducted a preliminary review, with two of the ten farm applications not being eligible under the federal requirement, stipulating that a farm is required to have 1/3 cropland, and 50% prime and important farming soils. However, eight farms

appear to be eligible, but need to have the required paperwork completed within the Federal deadline of two weeks.

2. Farmland Restoration Program.

A. Program overview and status update. Director Dippel discussed the status summary handout relating to received applications. Dippel indicated that 46 applications have been received to date, for a total of 684 acres to be restored; and added that the average increase in farm cropland acreage is 14% per farm. Dippel added that approximately 35% of the projects are on existing preserved farms.

3. Governor's Council for Agricultural Development Update. Commissioner Reviczky indicated that since the Governor's Council meeting in January 2012, a strategic plan has been designed towards developing farms. Reviczky indicated that two sub-committees have been developed: one focused on the demand side of farming, and one focused on the supply side of farming. Reviczky added that ten working groups have also been developed, with over 100 people involved, to conduct interviews with key stakeholders, to gather input on topic focused survey questions, related to infrastructure, farm to institution, input costs, labor, energy, regulation, environment, etc.

4. State Plan of Conservation and Development. Agent Winslow stated that the Draft of the State's Conservation and Development Plan (C& D Plan), for the five year period, covering 2013-2018, is available on-line; and is currently accepting public comments thru October 5, 2012. Winslow indicated that the Agency's submitted comments and suggestions in February 2012 received feedback, with many of the suggested comments incorporated into the State's C& D Plan. Winslow discussed the State's C& D map, which highlights urban, suburban, and conservation areas. Reviczky commented that the State's C & D Plan should recognize efforts to protect farms in proximity to people and seek to limit the expenditure of state funds that destroy prime and important farmland.

IV. Subcommittee Reports: No reports presented.

V. Other Business: Terry Jones discussed a cheese and wine festival fund raiser event, Sunday, September 23, 2012, from 12 noon to 4pm, at Jones Family Farms, Shelton, Connecticut, sponsored by Working Lands Alliance. Jones indicated that the Governor and Commissioner are expected to attend the event.

VI. Adjournment:

Next meeting, Monday, December 3, 2012, at [9:30 a.m.](#), At Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Large Conference Room, Hartford, CT. The meeting was adjourned at 11:15a.m.

(Guszkowski/Krissel- Unanimous).

Respectfully submitted by Denise O'Meara. Date: September 17, 2012