



Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council
Minutes for December 10, 2015 Meeting



Council Members Present: Steven Reviczky, Commissioner, Department of Agriculture (DoAg); Linda Auger, Taylor Brooke Winery, Hilary Criollo, Hopkins Vineyard; Jonathan Edwards, Jonathan Edwards Winery; ; Dr. Frank Ferrandino, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station; Jim Frey, Walker Road Vineyard; Russell Holmberg, Holmberg Orchards; Michelle Niedermeyer, Lost Acres Vineyard; Dean Gregory Weidemann, UConn-College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources. Participating by Phone: Jamie Jones, Jones Family Farm & Winery; George Motel, Sunset Meadow Vineyard.

Council Members Absent: Cameron Faustman, Director, Storrs Experiment Station.

Other Attendees: Robert Chipkin, Cassidy Hill Vineyard; Jim Melilo, Priam Vineyards; Jerry Van Voort, Priam Vineyards; and DoAg staff.

Call to Order

Commissioner Reviczky called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m.

Meeting Minutes Approval

Linda Auger moved to accept the August 13, 2015 minutes. Dr. Frank Ferrandino seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman's Report

Commissioner Reviczky reported on the state's budget, Community Investment Account distributions, and recent agency budget changes. A discussion ensued.

Passport Subcommittee

There was no report. A discussion regarding future Passport prize drawings and potential drawing locations took place, with members agreeing that details could be discussed at a future subcommittee meeting.

Big E Subcommittee

Jonathan Edwards presented a proposal for a management alternative for the Big E Wine Booth in the Connecticut Building, explaining 80% of the concerns expressed by wineries were addressed with his concept. Commissioner Reviczky explained that agency staff could no longer perform some of the related physical labor that had fallen on them. The Council thanked Jonathan for his efforts to resolve this issue. A motion was made and amended by Hilary Criollo to explore such a cooperative booth management approach, to be voted upon at a special council meeting in January 2016, at which the following will be discussed: figures on how much wine was poured at the 2015 Big E, the pour versus sales ratio, legal considerations with regard to permitting, a plan for losses, and how to cap such expenses. Linda Auger second the motion which carried with an abstention made by Michele Niedemeyer.

Old Business

Public Comment: Robert Chipkin, Cassidy Hill Vineyard, commented about a Freedom of Information Act request to the agency. He also expressed his opinions regarding use of the Connecticut Grown logo in the Passport. Jim Melilo, Priam Vineyards, expressed encouragement for the expansion of the growing of grapes in Connecticut. Linda Auger expressed an opinion regarding logo use and agreed Connecticut grape production must increase.

Council Membership: Jane Slupecki, DoAg, reported there are two expiring terms. All wineries are welcome to express interest in serving, others are welcome to volunteer to help in other capacities.

2014 Passport Data: Jane Slupecki, DoAg, will distribute the 2014 Customer Satisfaction Survey results. More than 500 responded.

2015 Passport Data: Jane Slupecki, DoAg, will distribute 2015 Passport data. There were 2,464 passports that qualified for prizes.

New Business

Public Comments: none.

Research and Education: Jane Slupecki, DoAg, reported that the council has been awarded an RMA grant for a half-day research and educational program. The council will need to set a date and determine specifics.

2016 Passport:

A discussion of the expenses for the passport revealed approximately \$30,000 in expenses. Jim Frey made a motion to set aside \$35,000 of the council budget for the 2016 Passport that cannot be used for any other purposes without a vote of the full council. The motion was seconded by Linda Auger, and carried unanimously, with Michele Niedemeyer abstaining. Michele Niedemeyer made a motion to keep the 2016 prizes the same as 2015 prizes, which was seconded by Jim Frey. The motion passed unanimously.

2016 Meeting Dates:

There was a discussion. Jim Frey made a motion to hold council meetings next year on February 11, May 12, July 14, and December 8, 2016. It was seconded by Michele Niedemeyer, and passed unanimously.


2015 Passport Prize Drawing:

Sixty-seven prizes were awarded to 67 eligible Passport participants.

Adjournment:

There was a motion by Jim Frey to adjourn, seconded by Hilary, and the motion carried, closing the meeting at 12:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jane M. Slupecki
December 15, 2015