



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 703, Hartford, CT 06103
Bureau of Agricultural Development and Resource Preservation



Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council Minutes of February 7, 2019 Meeting 450 Columbus Boulevard Conference Room 2 E South

Council Members Present: Melody Currey, Commissioner; Linda Auger; Rose Bove; Hilary Criollo; Jonathan Edwards; Dr. Frank Ferrandino; Richard Ruggiero; Cara Sawyer. **By Phone:** Jamie Jones; George Motel. **Council Members Absent:** Dr. Cameron Faustman; Russell Holmberg; Dr. Michael O'Neill. **Other Attendees:** DoAg staff, members of the public.

Call to Order: Commissioner Currey called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

Minutes of the December 6, 2018 Meeting: George Motel asked to amend under the Passport program that tickets to the Wine Festival would be purchased at the advance sale ticket price. Linda Auger moved to amend and accept the December 6, 2018 minutes. Jonathan Edwards seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman's Report/Financial Report: Commissioner Currey reported that as of 1/31/19 the council had expenditures of \$11,236.74, encumbrances of \$19,208.48, and a balance of \$59,772.24.

Discussion of Reports:

Social Media: Rebecca Eddy reported that in 2018 the Passport to CT Farm Wine Facebook page reached more than 377,200 people with more than 550,000 page impressions, and garnered 1,340 new likes for a total of 6,810 fans with 143 posts. A total of 13 promotional posts increased the fan base by 20% at a cost of \$364. To date in 2019, a Facebook event was created for the launch of the 2019 Passport program on 1/4/19, which has reached nearly 330,000 people with more than 15,500 responses.

Big E: Jonathan Edwards confirmed plans to move forward as operators. Rebecca Eddy reported that she and Rosemary Bove met with construction services to discuss modifications to the sales booth and build out of a new tasting booth. Discussion ensued regarding staffing and interactive exhibits in the tasting space. Jonathan Edwards made a motion to set aside up to \$10,000 to be used for build out of the tasting space and improvements to the sales booth. Linda Auger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Rebecca will update the application and move forward with soliciting participation from the wineries.

Research and Education: Dr. Frank Ferrandino expressed that he will be retiring in the near future and introduced Washington DaSilva from the CT Ag Experiment Station. Dr. Ferrandino also noted that the multi-state grant was lost and that the 32 cultivars currently located at Lockwood Farm in Hamden will be downsized. He will be contacting wineries to inquire if they are interested in vines. Washington brief the Council on various species and diseases threatening wine production. Richard Ruggiero reported that the Council will host a Research and Education program on June 19, 2019 at Paradise Hills Vineyard and Winery in Wallingford, CT. Guest speakers will include Anna Katharine Mansfield, Associate Professor at Cornell on hybrid wine production; and Timothy Martinson, Senior Extension Associate at Cornell on management of grape insect pests and diseases.

Passport: Rebecca reported that 39 wineries have submitted applications to date to participate in the 2019 Passport program. She has been in communicated with the printer and a production timeline established. Discussion ensued regarding the distribution of the passports and planning a meeting for wineries to receive their QR code. Rebecca will look into securing a date and central location for all wineries to meet to receive the QR code and app training. They will also pick up their printed passports at the same time. Alternative arrangements will be made for those unable to attend. Discussion ensued

regarding prizes and incentives. A cap of \$250 was decided for the drawing of a prize for the first 1,000 users of the app. The Council was advised that the motion made at the December 6, 2018 meeting restricting the use of emails collected in conjunction with the Passport program be limited to only notifications and communication from the Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council was invalid as it violates FOIA rules.

Legislation: Jason Bowsza provided an update on the legislative session and the various bills he is currently watching. George Motel expressed concern over additional bills, including the legalization of marijuana, labor, bottle bill and others.

Old Business

Public Comment: None.

No old business was discussed.

New Business

Rebecca reported that Russell Holmberg will be submitting a letter of resignation. Discussion ensued surrounding appointments and terms.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted on February 7, 2019,

Rebecca Eddy

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