

**DRAFT**  
**CT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**FARMLAND PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD (FPAB)**

Draft Minutes of Meeting

**December 8, 2008**

CT Farm Bureau, Windsor – 9:30 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Terry Jones, Susan Rose, George Hindinger, Steven Reviczky, John Guskowski, Norma O’Leary, Jim Krissel

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** James Zeoli, Lucy Nolan, Robin Chesmer, Ben Freund

**ALSO PRESENT:** J. Dippel, Lance Shannon, Katherine Winslow, George Krivda, Jr., Commissioner Prelli, Henry Talmage, Jiff Martin

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman George Hindinger called the meeting to order at 9:44 a.m.
- II. **Review of September 8, 2008 Minutes:** The minutes of the last meeting were tabled as some members did not have the opportunity to review them. Commissioner Prelli stated that the minutes of all meetings held on and after October 1, 2008, including both FPAB and its subcommittees, shall be posted to the Department of Agriculture’s website within seven days of the meeting date. Shannon shall be the contact for posting.
- III. **Any Old Business:** None presented.
- IV. **Farmland Preservation:**
  1. **Program update summary** – Commissioner Prelli handed out a press release by the Governor indicating \$5 million in bonding is on the agenda for farmland preservation at the upcoming State Bond Commission meeting to be held on December 12, 2008. Director Dippel handed out a summary of the Farmland Preservation Program and summarized its main points. Seven farms have closed in 2008 and an additional 13 farms have been surveyed and are pending closure within a few months. Altogether, 53 farms, in over 5800 acres for an estimated cost of over 31 million, have or are being negotiated in 2008 and 2009 (including those that closed in 2008). Just over 34 million in funding has been authorized. With the state of the economy, municipalities are being asked to increase their cost share amount.
- V. **Subcommittee Reports:**
  1. **Stewardship and Policy Report** – (the order of the subcommittee reports on the agenda was reversed as Chesmer was absent at the meeting). Following V.2., Director Dippel provided a handout of the agenda and meeting minutes of the last subcommittee meeting. He touched on some of the discussion topics, including farmstands, structures and impervious surface limits, and commercial activities. The next meeting of the subcommittee is scheduled for January 21, 2009.
  2. **Community Farms Program Criteria Report** - Guskowski provided handouts including a draft score sheet and draft application for the Community Farms Preservation Program. He reviewed the four statutory charges and the draft criteria assigned to each. Discussions of locally important soils and a cap in the State match shall necessitate some changes to the documents. Director Dippel requested comments on the draft application or any hypothetical farm applications to run

VI. **New Business:**

1. **State owned farmland discussion** – Chairman Hindinger opened discussion about several state-owned farms that may warrant permanent protection through some means and how might this be undertaken. About a dozen properties are held by state agencies, such as the Department of Corrections and Department of Developmental Services, as in the case of Southbury Training School. Farm buildings on State lands are extremely expensive to maintain and funding is not available; there is precedent for transferring land with buildings to private, non-profit ownership for maintenance and preservation purposes. Talmage and Martin through their legislative work with Working Lands Alliance (WLA) would like the FPAB to evaluate these farms and identify potential appropriate long-term protection measures to sustain the lands in agricultural use. Martin asked for time on the next agenda to review WLA’s legislative agenda and she provided copies of the fall 2008 issue of “edible NUTMEG” that contains an article she wrote entitled, “Saving Soils Good news for farmland preservation”. The following motion passed,

“Recognizing the Governor’s Responsible Growth Initiative and the need to invest in agricultural business and farmland resources, the Farmland Preservation Advisory Board sees potential opportunity to protect existing State-owned lands in agricultural use for nominal cost, and supports the concept of evaluating these lands to determine possible mechanisms for permanently preserving them in agricultural use.” (Guszkowski/Krissel – Unanimous).

2. **Any other items** – None presented.

VII. **Next meeting – meeting schedule for 2009:** The following meeting schedule was accepted and will be filed with the Secretary of State. The next meeting shall be March 2, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. at the CT Farm Bureau in Windsor.

Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>;  
Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>;  
Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>; and  
Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>.

VIII. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at noon (Guszkowski/Reviczky – unanimous).

Prepared by Katherine Winslow.  
Date 12/8/2008.