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Chester, Clinton, Cromwell,
Deep River, Durham, East Haddam,
East Hampton, Essex, Haddam, Kill-
ingworth, Lyme, Middlefield, Mid-
dletown, Old Lyme,
Old Saybrook, Portland, Westbrook

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL AGRICULTURE COUNCIL

April 21, 2022

Members:

Chester: Luc Bouffard
Clinton: Richard Martin
Cromwell: John Whitney
Deep River
Durham: Warren Hertzog
East Haddam:
East Hampton: -----
Essex: -----
Haddam: John Halfinger
Killingworth: Walter Adametz
Lyme: Bill Farrell
Middlefield:
Middletown:
Old Lyme:
Old Saybrook:
Portland: Alan Fenrow
Westbrook: -----

Staff:

Sam Gold
Janice Ehle/Meyer

Guests:

Meeting

The meeting was a Zoom call.

1) Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order by John Halfinger. A motion was made by Walter Adametz and seconded by John Halfinger to table the minutes from the January 20, 2022 meeting because the first hour needs to be added to the minutes. Walter Adametz made a motion to ac-

cept the minutes from the February 17, 2022 meeting. John Halfinger seconded the motion. Motion passed.

2) Public Comments

No public comments.

3) Website-

John Halfinger asked everyone to check the Knowyourfarmers.org website to make sure that the information is correct concerning their farm.

4) Access to Agriculture on Local Busses

Janice Ehle/Meyer explained that the access to Agriculture program is done by CT RC&D. Two of the bigger busses in the region have computer screens on them. The screens will show a map of local farms and riders can use the QR code to access the information about the farms. Farms websites, farmers markets and local stores are displayed where riders will have information about local foods.

5) Farm Viability Grant

A. The drill has been ordered and the two other pieces of equipment are being considered.

B. John Whitney talked about how interesting the video for the transplanter was. A discussion followed and John Halfinger explained how the transplanter works. John also explained how the three machines work together.

C. The February RiverCOG meeting was the approval to purchase the drill and the roller crimper. The RiverCOG meeting on March 23, 2022, will be when RAC presents which transplanter they want to purchase and hopefully get the approval of the RiverCOG to purchase it. The RAC subcommittee is looking at three transplanters and will be explaining them to the RiverCOG. A discussion followed.

D. The RAC Subcommittee meeting on March 22, 2022, will be when the committee decides which transplanter of the three to order and which one to present at the COG meeting on the following day.

E. There was a discussion about what the break-even point is on how much time is saved to use the transplanter.

F. There was a discussion about how much cleaning or sterilizing must be done on shared equipment for an organic farm? The rental agreement must say that the machines need to be cleaned better than when it came with water only.

G. A motion was made by Walter Adametz to approve the purchase of the transplanter contingent on recommendation of the RAC Subcommittee specifying 1 of 3 transplanters. The motion was seconded by John Whitney. A discussion followed concerning the amount of \$ for the grant and how much is being spent. There are some costs that are still unknown. There was a discussion about unknown costs fuel etc. Motion passed.

1. The questions from the last COG meeting were reviewed to make sure that there were no issues left unanswered. The RiverCOG had decided that the equipment should be held and not used until the questions were answered.

The questions were:

- How to move equipment – trailer or no trailer? 8 communities said that we could use their public works trailers. *No public works trailers will be used, farmers must move the equipment with a tractor (if short distances, neighbor to neighbor or field to field) or on a trailer that the farmer is responsible for getting.*
- How to cross the river? *On a trailer.*
- Where will the equipment be stored? Will it be secure? Will it be a town facility? *The equipment will **not** be stored in a town facility. Local farmers in the program will be storing the equipment. The farmer storing the equipment will have it covered in the winter when it is not being used.*
Also, ID plates will be added to each piece of equipment.
- Who holds the insurance? *Each farmer will be adding a rider to their insurance and RiverCOG will have insurance for the equipment.*

2. A recommendation was made to follow RC&D's program with the difference of having the equipment trailered.
3. Durham Fair grounds may have storage space for the equipment in the winter. Janice will check with them. Renting a storage unit for the winter is also an option.
4. Richard Martin said that he spoke with Brian Hurlburt. Brian liked the idea of having farmers share equipment and that Brian wants the RAC program to continue and not to end.
5. Adding a metal tag on each piece of equipment for ID is important for identification.

A vote was taken to ask the COG for approval to buy a transplanter, on the condition that subcommittee can agree on which transplanter is best to order. Motion passed.

6) Old Business

DECD RiverCOG grant – to get more access to food from local farmers. A committee will be organized to help. Kristy Benson has volunteered to be a part of the committee.

7) New Business

A. Legislation to allow trucks to pull farm equipment.

- This could be another project for the RAC to work on. An idea would be to start some meetings after the election in the fall.
- A suggestion was made to hire a lobbyist to work on it for us.
- A revision to the existing law would be to use existing language “registered vehicle” could be added.

B. To organize another subcommittee to set up the program, insurance, take pictures before take the equipment and after returning. Need a check list of what to look for. Alan Fenrow has volunteered to help make forms etc.
Still looking to have more people step up to help on this committee.

8) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 pm. A motion was made by Walter Adametz and seconded by Richard Martin. Motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 21, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Ehle/Meyer