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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

October 20, 2022

Members:

Chester:
Clinton: Richard Martin
Cromwell:
Deep River: Ron Larson
Durham: Warren Herzig
East Haddam:
East Hampton: -----
Essex: -----
Haddam: John Halfinger
Killingworth: Walter Adametz
Lyme:
Middlefield:
Middletown: Rebecca Isaacson
Old Lyme:
Old Saybrook:
Portland: Alan Fenrow
Westbrook: -----

Staff:

Janice Ehle/Meyer

Guests:

No guests.

Meeting

The meeting was a Zoom call.

1) Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order by John Halfinger at 7:04. A motion was made by Warren Herzig and seconded by Walter Adametz to accept the minutes from the September 15, 2022, meeting. John Halfinger and Alan Fenrow abstained from voting. Motion approved.

2) Public Comments

No public comments.

3) On-line sales for local farmers

A. Janice said that Healthy PlanEat has gotten the contract for the project. Rosemary's lawyers are now reviewing the contract and will get back to us.

4) Website –

A. Janice presented analytics on the website. Since September first to today there have been 87 site sessions, 66 unique visitors and the average session duration was 8 minutes and 28 seconds. Peak times are Sunday and Monday for the site. The desktop to mobile is 64% to desktop and 36% mobile which is a switch from where it was before. There are 89% of the people are new and 11% are returning visitors. The returning visitors has increased from where it was before. 66 people were from CT, 8 from MA, 4 from NY, 3 DC, 3 RI, 1 DC, and 1 NC.

5) Farm Viability Grant

- A. Janice asked that people send in their timesheets as a report is due to DEEP. We need to keep track of time for our matching funds.
- B. Ron Larson attended the meeting to talk about a farmer who wants to use the NT equipment at the Chester Fair grounds. He will be seeding ½ of the field to compare the difference with the planting. He will be contacting John Halfinger to ask some questions.
- C. Janice talked about the result of looking at maps of Chester and Deep River to see if there might be properties to use the NT equipment. There is a possibility of 4 properties in Chester and 3 in Deep River.
- D. Janice said that she talked with Baylee Drown to ask her what the difficulties are with using the NT equipment. Without even taking a breath, Baylee said transportation. There was a conversation about using the transplanter or roller crimper and putting them on a smaller trailer.
- E. There was a question if farm bureau members had gotten an email about the Demo Day? A discussion followed.
- F. John Halfinger talked about another Esch drill that can be rented for \$250 plus a per acre charge. Presently, RAC is not charging anything to use the drill.
- G. The RiverCOG lawyer talked with someone from DMV to ask about the issues of transporting the drill. Steve said that the trailer needs to be registered as a trailer. Steve spoke about how it would be considered a piece of farm equipment. Steve suggested that we put it on a trailer. A question came up on how the COG is liable if someone pulls the equipment with their truck?

- H. Janice talked with Amanda Johnson and Jim Hyde to do a joint DEMO day in the spring.
- I. There was a discussion about mowing the field at Haddam Meadows.
- J. There was a discussion about the cost of hiring someone to transport the drill. \$250 one way.

6) Durham Agriculture Commission

A. Warren Herzig said that the Durham Ag commission has been working on zoning regulations. Durham farmers are presently allowed to sell anything from their farm at a farm stand. Someone complained to P&Z that a farmer was selling items not grown on their farm at a farm stand. It came to the attention of Durham Ag Commission that at a Christmas tree farm there are other items sold that are not grown on their farm. They are now in violation. The Ag Commission developed draft regulations to allow for the sale of other products that were related to the principal agricultural operation. The regulation needs to be simple and inexpensive for the farmer. There was a public hearing and the P&Z had concerns about other items being sold. The P&Z said that with a special exception and some changes that this could be approved. The minimum size lot of 5 acres seemed to be an issue.

B. A discussion followed concerning farm value products from other local farms being allowed at a farm stands.

7) Old Business

A. Richard talked about the trailer to purchase and working with Rand for additional ramps so that all equipment will work to go up the ramps.

8) New Business

A. Janice said that Bill Farrell is stepping down as the Lyme representative.

B. Food Capacity Building Grant from DoA – to get more farmers accessibility to food. The max is \$10,000, no match required, due March 15th.

1. One idea is to work with Healthy PlanEat to have more lower cost items available
2. Another idea is to have the Soup Kitchens buy food from local farmers at a good price, that will go to Soup Kitchens where people will have access to local nutritious food. The farmer will say, “I have X do you want it and the soup kitchen will decide what you want to make with it.” There is a delivery charge.
3. At the Chester market, a program could be developed to use the remaining products go to Soup Kitchens.
4. The programs are getting the farmers and the soup kitchens working together.
5. CT River Coastal Conservation District was awarded an organizational recognition. Congratulations RAC!!

9) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at

8:05 pm. A motion was made by Walter Adametz and seconded by Warren Herzig. Motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, December 15, 2022, at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Ehle/Meyer

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