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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

March 16, 2023

Members:

Chester:
Clinton: Richard Martin
Cromwell:
Deep River Ron Larson
Durham:
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:

Roselyn Reeps, Killingworth
Heather Milardo, The Estuary
Tim Cook, AgriTech

Meeting

The meeting was a Zoom call and in person at the RiverCOG office.

1) Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order by John Halfinger at 7:08. A motion was made by Walter Adametz and seconded by Richard Martin to accept the minutes from the February 16, 2023, meeting. Motion approved.

Introductions were made around the room.

2) Public Comments/Presentations

- **Roselyn Reeps** spoke about how to create a composting program to make compost or animal feed with municipalities and local farmers. The idea is to lower the cost for municipalities and supply farmers with compost and or animal feed.

Roselyn found that to do a composting project, a volume reduction permit is required with a large fee. Also, engineered drawings area required along with for a water permit for the plan. DEEP has not had a project done yet that farmers can afford to do.

If the food scraps were taken for animal feed, there would not be the volume reduction permit requirement if the farmer would be following acceptable agriculture practices. If the food scraps were to go to chickens, the chicken manure can then go to make compost for the farmer.

- A suggestion was made to contact NRCS for help.
- Farm digesters were designed to use animal waste and are now looking into using food waste. Fort Hill Farm, Thompson, CT has a digester.
- Bright Feeds is a company in CT that uses food waste for making animal food.
- A suggestion was to develop a small composting site (two towns) by starting small as a pilot for the state.
- There was a discussion about what a municipality needs to make a digester. A container (roll-off) with pipes on the bottom to blow air and, a tumbler. Problem is the water waste, but the waste water is a valuable fertilizer. The container then has to be opened and laid out to complete the curing process.
- Roselyn is going to look into what the possibilities are to do a town compost project and what the requirements would be.
- **Heather Milardo** introduced herself from the local senior center in Old Saybrook and doing the meals on wheels program. They have a large commercial kitchen that is used until about 1:00 every day. The remaining time, the kitchen is not used. Heather asked if farmers would like to use the kitchen to make their products. The farmers really liked the idea of using the existing kitchen. Heather is going to investigate what the fees etc. might be. This could take about 6 months to do. Possibly next fall this could be organized.
- The food that they presently buy is from a large supplier and they would also like to buy from local farms.
- Heather also talked about the food scraps that they generate and asked for suggestions on how to dispose of them.
- A suggestion was made to look into Health PlanEat to purchase local products.
- Heather will stay in touch with their progress.
- **Tim Cook** from AgriTech International joined the meeting. AgriTech is a commercial fertilizer company. They are best known for their liquid calcium to replace the

- lime. And they sell different types of liquid fertilizers, foliar feeds, soil amendments etc.
- Tim explained how the liquid calcium works and said that it is about 95% available for plants.
 - Questions were asked and there was a conversation about soil tests.

3) RAC Board

RAC Board members needed.

Cromwell
East Haddam
East Hampton
Essex
Lyme
Middlefield
Old Lyme
Westbrook

4) Website

A. In the last month have had 65 site sessions, 48 site sessions last month; 27 unique visitors, 28 unique visitors last month, 2m 32s is the average session time, down from 8m 47s last month.

5) Farm Viability Grant

A. Trailer – is here. There is an appointment on April 5th with DMV to get the trailer registered. After registration, the next step will be to bring the trailer to Halfinger Farm to fit the equipment on and measure how the rails will work for the trailer. A date was made for the extra ramps to be put on the trailer. A suggestion was made to purchase 4/ 27” x 2” straps or buy a case. Also to paint where the straps will go.

B. Jay Brown from Middlefield would like to use the equipment. Janice will email him to ask him to fill out the application and send insurance information.

6) CEDS Grant

A. Healthy PlanEat has signed the contract and is starting to contact farms to see if they are interested in joining her site. Running Brook Farm in Killingworth has joined and will be a pick-up location.

7) Soil Health Day Conservation Equipment Events.

- It worked well
- there were a lot of people at the event. Many were from out of state.
- the farm speaker, Ciccarelli was great.
- Compaction at the end of the hay fields was a discussion.

8) Old Business –

- Bright Feed – conversation about them making animal feed from food waste in pelletized form. They will be asked to join a RAC meeting.
- There was a discussion about using food waste for cattle feed long ago. A book called Modern Meat was recommended.

9) New Business –

- Gardening 101 at Running Brook Farm in Killingworth. Info will be coming out.

10) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:40.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 20, 2023, at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Ehle/Meyer