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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 19, 2023

Members:

Chester: Luc Buffard
Clinton: Richard Martin
Cromwell: _____
Deep River
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 EhleMeyer

Guests:

No guests in attendance.

Meeting

The meeting was a Zoom call and in person.

1) Approval of Minutes

The meeting started at 7:10 by John Halfinger. The minutes from May, June, August and September 2023 were approved by Walter Adametz and seconded by Rebecca Isaacson. Motion passed unanimously.

2) Public Comments/Presentations

There were no comments or presentations.

3) RAC Board Members needed

Cromwell
East Haddam
East Hampton
Essex
Lyme
Middlefield
Old Lyme
Westbrook

4) Website

Janice did not have the updated information for the traffic on the website. She will report on the two months at the next meeting.

5) Farm Viability Grant

Trailer

- A. Richard said that the side rails are on the trailer, and it now needs to be painted. Richard explained how he clamped the sides on the trailer to do the drilling.
- B. The bill was paid for the work done on the trailer.
- C. Janice said that there is still \$200.00 to spend on equipment. Richard asked if paint could be included in that? Ideas for spending the money included bolts for the trailer from Richard, a lug wrench was suggested, a two sided ramp was suggested to raise the axel was also suggested, a roadside triangle reflector was also suggested. Janice and Richard will meet to shop.

Final Report

- A. We will act in support for RC&D, they will be running the program.
- B. The purpose - add carbon storage and carbon sequestration, promote soil health and to expose farmers in the area to the equipment using cover crops, increase acreage, minimize erosion and see if program fits their program and support soil health. Climate smart agriculture using no-till
- C. Approaches – good
- D. Goals – no land farmed positive – increase land farmed by no-till with more time that goal will be better achieved. With RC&D that will happen. Without cover crops, not seeing the results that need.
Reducing dependence of herbicides by using cover crops
- E. Lessons learned – can't use a tractor on a restricted highway, can use a tractor to pull on any other road. Restricted limited access roads from larger roads.
- F. Additional information –
- G. Success Story – summarize – list highlights and successes.

We had a lot of people from out of state at our equipment demonstrations asking about equipment hubs and the availability to use equipment without purchasing it. The farms that used it were extremely pleased with the program and the results and the fact that we are able to have RC&D continue with our project and excited to take this program to the next level. We feel that it is truly a success story in the making. If another group is looking to do a similar program, we are willing to help them with starting up. A lot of research went into what equipment to purchase. Pulling a drill behind a truck is new information. We realize the importance of no-till but with COVID, equipment and material costs going up the financial output to a farmer increased in the short time frame. Not a full growing season. It will take 5 to 7 years to see a notable change.

6) Durham agriculture zoning amendments updates

Warren was not at the meeting to update that amendment.

East Haddam P&Z agriculture proposal

The proposal was reviewed. Comments were:

- That it is a very thorough proposal.
- Side, front, and back setbacks should be the same as a garage and not separated out and zoned differently. This should be the same as setbacks for the zone applicable.
- The number of animals on a farm does not consider the size of the farm. The number of animals should not be limited. The states health codes need to be considered but the state guidelines and should not be made into zoning restrictions.
- There should not be minimum acreage requirements for a farm store or a farm market. This should not exceed any set-back requirements above what is required for zones.
- There should be no difference between farming and nonfarming setbacks.
- Hobby farms should be taken out. If not selling anything, a hobby farm should be allowed.
- Intensive commercial farm operation does not have a definition. The number of animals should not be limited.

Agriculture should be allowed on any site.

- The restrictions are setting up East Haddam for enforcement problems and confusion. These regulations will be very hard to enforce. These restrictions may force farmers to farm in other towns and not in East Haddam.
- More regulations and rules are being added and it makes it harder for someone to farm in East Haddam.
- A comment for East Haddam is the new restrictions are only making it harder to farm in East Haddam, it will be a very difficult to enforce, these regulations do not support farmers in East Haddam they hurt farmers trying to farm in East Haddam. Most volunteers on the zoning board will most likely not be trained to address livestock issues, making more restrictions will only make it harder. If there are too many animals on a

property, there are ways to address that through the Department of Agriculture and the Health Departments and these should be the governing entities above restricting the number of animals on different types of farms. Using best management practices is already part of the regulations. It is hard to make one set of rules to fit everybody, each situation should be looked at individually as soils, terrain, etc are all different for different properties.

8) Old Business –

No old business

9) New Business –

Some monies are available from the No-till grant and must be spent by next week.

10) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:18.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Ehle/Meyer