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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

November 16, 2023

Members:

Chester:
Clinton: Richard Martin
Cromwell: _____
Deep River
Durham: Warren Herzig
East Haddam:
East Hampton: -----
Essex: -----
Haddam:
Killingworth: Walter Adametz
Lyme: _____
Middlefield: _____
Middletown: Rebecca Isaacson
Old Lyme:
Old Saybrook:
Portland:
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 7:02 by Co-Chairman Warren Herzig at 7:02. Due to not having a quorum, no votes were made. The October minutes will have to be voted on at the December meeting.

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

-Richard Martin said that there was a new couple at a Farm Bureau meeting. He will try to find out who they are and contact them.

-A suggestion was made to contact the towns that have Agriculture Commissions to see if they might have a suggestion for a RAC member

4) Website – Traffic overview

A. Janice said that there were 58 site sessions in the last 30 days and 43 of those were unique visitors. People are going directly to the knowyourfarmers.org site first and second to featured farmer. 64% of the people are using mobile devices and Monday was the busiest day.

B. A suggestion was made to list which towns need representation on the knowyourfarmers.org website and to mention that the representative need not be a farmer but someone who supports local farming.

5) Farm Viability Grant

A. Janice said that the final report was submitted and that she has not heard anything back from DEEP.

B. The next step with RC&D would be to get a contract organized that RC&D can review.

C. One comment was that the RiverCOG region has priority use of the equipment. If the equipment is not being used, other farmers outside of our region may use it.

D. Another suggestion was to have RC&D supply the seed for the ground cover.

E. A suggestion was made that the Durham Fair might have storage available for the equipment. Warren will contact Durham Fair Association.

F. A suggestion was made to talk with Amanda about RAC requests for the equipment. Amanda will be asked to attend the next RAC meeting.

6) Durham, Old Lyme, and East Haddam agriculture zoning amendments updates

A. Warren said that Durham P&Z modified their agriculture regulations. Two issues that were brought up are: An equestrian operation is considered a commercial facility and the equestrian operation had to be a “legitimate farming operation.” Would a commercial property be taxed differently than a farm? “Legitimate farming operation” was taken out after a conversation with Durham’s Agriculture Commission. The approval would be done under a special exception that would require a hearing, with a notice and possibly a site walk.

B. There were no updates on Old Lyme and East Haddam’s zoning amendments.

7) Old Business –

A. Letter of recommendation for Luc Buffard to support him with his nomination as Teacher of the Year for a Magnet School will go out to the RAC board.

8) New Business –

A. East Hampton P&Z zone changes to Section 8.4.C adding “Accessory Uses to Agriculture” (see attached).

1. The RAC had a lot of questions with the East Hampton’s “Accessory Uses to Agriculture” proposal. They have asked to keep that proposal open to have a chance to learn more about the application.

B. Janice explained that the RiverCOG has a grant to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There was a webinar to generate ideas for projects. The RAC has also been asked to respond to suggested projects.

1. Soil Health –. Support no-till.
2. Keep the ground covered – do programs to promote the benefits of cover crops.
3. Promote local farmers to reduce the amount of transporting of products.
4. Use UConn for the scientific input. Support research.
5. Anerobic digesters – capturing methane.

9) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 7:00 pm. Bring something to share for a holiday party.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Ehle/Meyer