

**WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
FARMLAND LEASE PROGRAM COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 16, 2010**

The Farmland Lease Committee of the Wallingford Conservation Commission held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, June 16, 2010 at 4:30 p.m., in the Basement Conference Room, Town Hall, 45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT.

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Dianne Saunders. Also present were farmland lease program committee members Carl Arsenault, Thomas Pietras and James Pyskaty. No staff or members of the public were present.

The following items were discussed:

- 1.) Status of maple sugar bid specs, Anderson Rd: not completed yet. Will try to have draft of criteria by August, so bid can go out September or October, 2010.
- 2.) Status of recommendations for field 7A: Tom Pietras gave an update on this issue. The Engineering Department has not been out to the site. Tom reported on the site visit with NRCS reps (Roman Mrozinski), Tom Pietras, Dianne Saunders, and Jim Pyskaty. Mary Heffernon also attended the site visit. The group feels Mr. Mrozinski's recommendations are reasonable, and all agreed that continued use of the field for agriculture is preferable. For the present time, the field should be planted as hay-type crop until we can ascertain whether there is potential for any other use. Certain sections will be left as natural wetland areas. Local farmers will be contacted to determine interest. Tom reported that Lyman Hall Voag is not interested in working with field 7A.
- 3.) Monitoring worksheet and tasks: Dianne Saunders passed out a draft of a simple monitoring form for farmland lease fields. She proposed that each person volunteer for 2 lessors and monitor during the year, write comments and observations on the forms, and discuss with the farmer twice a year, once during the spring-summer growing season, and in the Fall after cover crops are established. The purposes of the monitoring form are to get feedback from the farmers, document good stewardship practices, and generate suggestions for the leases going forward. The purpose is not to get involved in the management of the farmer's activities, but to work with the farmers for continued good stewardship and support of local agriculture.

Each committee member volunteered for 2 farmers. Dianne will draft a letter to the farmers, to notify them of their contact person. A copy of the draft monitoring form will be provided to Erin O'Hare for comment. The group discussed the mechanism for handling encroachment problems. Timely follow-up is needed for encroachment problems; this will need to be determined.

- 4.) Signage: The CT Dept of Agriculture has given permission to use the 'Connecticut Grown' logo for the farmland lease program, for posting signs, etc. The group needs to check on prices of ready-made signs. If too expensive, quotes will be obtained to have signs printed. Signs will go on farmland lease properties, in hopes of promoting local agriculture, and discouraging vandalism.

- 5.) Recommendations for field 4C: Tom Pietras suggested possibly revising the lot lines on field 4B, to offer the farmer the opportunity to include 4C and avoid difficult areas. Jim Pyskaty will ask the lessee if he is interested in pursuing this option.
- 6.) Recommendations for Galko/Cuneo: There is heavy woody goldenrod infestation in the larger field near the glacial erratic, and some multiflora in other fields. The group discussed various possibilities for alternative management, such as farmland lease for hay (possible Cheshire farmer interest), or using sections for community gardens. Carl Arsenault feels the area should be left for wildlife. He suggested it may be necessary to cut the fields in August, and treat with a pesticide for broadleaf weeds after re-growth begins. The group decided to look the mowing plan, propose a change to the full Conservation Commission as needed. John Gawlak (Recreation Dept) will be contacted regarding potential community garden usage for part of the area. The Water Division could install a spigot for water, but the issue of parking would need to be resolved.
- 7.) Planning for 2011 bid process: Leases on most of the fields expire 12/31/2011. A meeting will be requested with the Purchasing Agent and Law Department to discuss options for the 2011 process.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 pm.