

Farmland Preservation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2017
10:00 am
450 Columbus Blvd
Hartford, CT 06103

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Jim Zeoli, Henry Talmage, , Ben Freund, Terry Jones, John Guskowski, Joan Nichols, Lucy Nolan, Joe Bonelli

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Krissel, Robin Chesmer, George Hindinger, George Malia,

AGENCY STAFF PRESENT: Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky, Bureau Director Linda Piotrowicz, Jason Bowsza

- 1) CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Zeoli called the meeting to order at 10:14am
- 2) REVIEW OF September 29, 2016 Minutes
 - a. It was moved by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Jones, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed **UNANIMOUSLY**.
- 3) OLD BUSINESS
 - a. DoAg updates
 - i. Farmland Preservation Update
 1. Commissioner Reviczky explained the program accomplishments for calendar year 2016. There are an additional five farms that are at the closing stages, but have had issues arise that need to be worked out. It was noted that ongoing issues with NRCS have required DoAg to forego opportunities to partner with the federal government. Of the 15 projects that were closed on in 2016, only three of them involved partnering with the federal government. Commissioner Reviczky noted that the relationship between NRCS and DoAg are improving, and there is reason for optimism.
 2. Mr. Guskowski commented that the 2016 performance of the program is very impressive. He wanted to know if the department had the resources necessary to sustain this level of success. Mr. Talmage asked if there was an opportunity to utilize personal services agreements while waiting to hire staff.
 3. Commissioner Reviczky gave an update on funding levels available to the farmland preservation program. Chairman Zeoli asked if any funds available to the agency had been frozen or cancelled. Commissioner Reviczky stated that that had not happened.
 4. Chairman Zeoli asked if the preserved projects were categorized by active use of the land. The commissioner responded that we know that information at the time of closing, but over time the usage may change.
 - ii. State-Owned Farmland

1. The commissioner reported that the conservation easement on Southbury Training School is nearly completed. The baseline document will need to be completed before the conservation easement can be fully executed. This will allow permits to be awarded for the various farmers that had been awarded access previously.
 - iii. State Budget
 1. Not much information will be available until after the Governor's Budget Address in February.
- 4) NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Connecticut Dairy Summit (Ben Freund)
 - i. Mr. Freund explained the CT Dairy Summit that was held on January 3rd. He congratulated the Farm Bureau and the commissioner on hosting a great program that was intended to educate, not to lobby.
- 5) ADJOURNMENT
 - a. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason E. Bowsza
Office of the Commissioner