



## CONNECTICUT COUNCIL ON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

### **Minutes of the Regular Meeting – April 24, 2019 deKoven House in Middletown, CT**

**Call to order: 10:18 a.m. by Denise Savageau, Interim Treasurer.**

**Attendance:** Members Denise Savageau (SWCD), Jennifer Kaufman (Appointee of Governor) and Stephen Anderson (DoAG). Ex-officio members: Abigail Maynard (CT Ag. Exp. Station), Tom Morgart and Joyce Purcell (NRCS). Staff and guests: Lilian Ruiz, (CT Council), Jeanne Davies (RC&D), and Joanna Shapiro (NCCD).

#### **I. WELCOME**

Savageau opened the meeting communicating that Jeff Folger, Chair, would be absent due to a family emergency.

#### **II. REGULAR BUSINESS**

##### **A. Minutes:**

Minutes of 01/16/19 were reviewed. Motion to approve as presented by Steve Anderson. J. Shapiro, second. Unanimously approved.

##### **B. Treasurers Report:**

Treasurer's report for the for 04/16/2019 and proposed budget were reviewed. The period for the financial report is January 1, 2018-June 30, 2019 to account for the adjustment from calendar year to fiscal year. Motion to accept the financial report and place it on file by J. Kaufman, 2nd by J. Shapiro. Unanimously approved. Motion to approve the proposed budget with modification to correct excel formula error on June 30, 2020 balance from \$99,600.00 to \$97,100.00 file by J. Kaufman, second by Stephen Anderson. Unanimous approval.

#### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A. Election of Officers**

Jennifer Kaufman motioned to elect Denise Savageau as Chair and Jeffrey Folger as Secretary-Treasurer of the Council effective July 1, 2019, and to open a position for Vice-Chair with the goal to develop new leadership. The motion was seconded by Steve Anderson and unanimously approved. The Election of Officers will be ratified in the next Council Regular Meeting.

## **B. Plan of Work for 2020**

Savageau communicated that the Plan of Work for 2020 would not be presented at the April meeting and proposed that all members discuss and introduce new items to be incorporated into the plan, to be presented in the next Council Regular Meeting. Kaufman offered to contribute to the Council's website maintenance together with Lilian Ruiz.

## **C. WPCAG: training/workshop/conference for growers on BMPs on water conservation.**

Savageau reported that the new State Water Plan specifically identifies agriculture as an industry that impact water resources. She indicated that at last Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG) meeting, the group identified a need for training on water conservation for the green/nursery business in CT. Savageau proposed a training program for growers on water conservation to be coordinated and hosted by the Council, particularly catering to the needs of the Nursery/Greenhouse industry in assessing solutions for water management. Tom Morgart of the NRCS will establish a workgroup to establish the course of action and proposed to use UConn's survey on farmers' needs as a background to develop the topic. Morgart communicated that salt levels have increased sharply on water supply, including drinking water and Savageau suggested that the coordinating the discussion on DPH/DEEP over salt/brine BMP's be included in the Council's Operations Plan.

## **D. CT DEEP Nomination of Long Island Sound into the National Estuarine Research Reserve Program.**

Savageau presented the CT DEEP request for support for the NERR proposed for CT. By consensus, it was agreed that the Council will send a letter of support to the nomination of the LIS into the National Estuarine Research Reserve Program. Ruiz will prepare a draft letter from the Council.

## **E. Pollinator Week**

Savageau stated that in the past, the Council was the entity who facilitated the Governor's declaration of Pollinator Week in the state. Abby Maynard offered to check with the Ag Exp. Station on what is the course of action to get the proclamation done.

## **IV. Old Business**

### **A. Legislative Updates**

#### **a. FY 2019-2020 Funding**

Funding w/ DEEP/Passport to Parks is in place and stable for all CDs, CT RC&D and the Council. Second invoice submitted in March 2019 for FY 2019, and payments have been issued. There has been some proposed action that would weaken the P2P legislation, through exemption of certain categories. This is being monitored during the legislative session.

#### **b. Soil Health Legislation**

Savageau gave an update on the proposed soil health that was initiated by NOFA and that directly impacts legislation that creates the Council and conservation districts. This year the proposed legislation removed the reference to regenerative agriculture and regulations. And focused language on soil health. It also sought to create a fund for soil health programs. Unfortunately the new language was not included in the bill that was called to public hearing.

CACD joined with NOFA to submit substitute language. Because of the uncertain language both the DOA and Farm Bureau testified against the bill. Savageau proposed that the Council take the lead in this because it involves our legislation and the Council includes many of the stakeholder groups. She proposed create a working group for the legislation and to start with a dialogue with the new Commissioner of Agriculture, Bryan Hulburt.

## **B. LISW-RCPP Update**

Lilian Ruiz updated the Council on the status of the contracts within the RCPP: payment requests submitted are up to date, Council is finalizing the request for modification and extension, and funds will be redirected to areas with more demand for funds. There are 6 HFRP properties applying land protection easements at various stages of due diligence. The next Steering Committee Meeting is scheduled for June 6, 2019.

## **C. Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant**

The Council was not awarded the grant.

## **D. NACD Northeast Region Meeting 2019**

Savageau updated the Council on planning for the NACD Northeast Regional Meeting which will be hosted by CACD and held August 25-28 at Foxwoods Resort and Casino. The committee is deciding on options for tours (Ag, Urban, Coastal), as well as speakers/panelists. The committee is looking for options on sponsorships as well as gift bags. Ruiz will be assisting with coordination of the meeting.

## **V. AGENCY REPORTS**

- A. CAES: Abigail Maynard reported. New tick surveillance program has been established, partially funded by the CDC. 40 sites in all 8 counties from April to October, focus on black legged tick. Seven pathogens will be screened. Complements the state supported tick testing program which tests 3,000-4,000 ticks submitted by citizens annually. Mosquito trapping and arbovirus testing is continuing: 92 sites trapping starts June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Traps collected about every 10 days. If West Nile or other disease found than traps collected once or twice a week.
- B. DEEP: absent.
- C. UCONN: absent.
- D. CACD: Denise Savageau reported on the above mentioned upcoming NACD Northeast Regional Meeting.
- E. RC&D: Jeanne Davies reported that CT RC&D is busy with numerous projects and that she is reporting on several of most interest to the Council as follows:
  - a. Soil Health Workshop will be held August 11th at Hidden Blossom in Union CT with professionals highlighting innovations with Silvio Pasture and Agro Forestry. This is the 6<sup>th</sup> year with funding from NRCS.
  - b. Following an inspirational conference in Rhode Island, Amanda Johnson is working with some other organizations on a composting conference for Summer or Fall 2019.

- c. ERT Program, in addition to the Air Line Trail State Park ERT and the ERTs for Durham, Bloomfield and Bristol, ERT staff are working on an approved ERT request from twelve of the RiverCOG to assemble towns etc to inventory and develop strategies for aquatic invasive plant management, specifically a potential new genotype of hydrilla which will have damaging impacts on CT River coves, wetlands and marinas. This ERT also includes support and work to locate and help secure funding for survey and mapping via the CT Agriculture Experiment Station for the CT River and coordination with the Gateway Commission, the Eight Mile Wild and Scenic Watershed and CT Marine Trades Association.
  
- F. NRCS: Tom Morgart reported that the 2018 Farm Bill passed, with \$450M annually allocated to farmland preservation ACEP-ALE. This is a large increase over previous bill. There is no announcement on funding availability for CT this year yet, so for now the previous bill guidelines are being followed. The Farm Bill requires new and more flexible rules for the RCPP program and also requires that 10% of all conservation program funds be used for source water protection. There are two DC job appointments for CT NRCS.
  
- G. FSA: absent
  
- H. DoAG: Steve Anderson provided a written report. See attached. New Commissioner of Agriculture is Bryan Hulburt.
  
- I. Governor's Appointee: No report.
  
- J. Storrs Ag Exp. Station: absent.

## **VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -**

None.

## **VII. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:14 PM.