



## CONNECTICUT COUNCIL ON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

### **Minutes of the Regular Meeting – July 11, 2019 deKoven House in Middletown, CT**

**Call to order: 10:05 a.m. by Denise Savageau, Chair.**

**Attendance:** Members Denise Savageau (SWCD), Jeff Folger (North Central CD), Walter Smith (CT River Coastal CD), Charles Lee (CT DEEP Designee), and Jennifer Kaufman (Appointee of Governor). Ex-officio members: Abigail Maynard (CT Ag. Exp. Station), Tom Morgart (NRCS). Staff and guests: Lilian Ruiz, (CT Council), Amanda Johnson (RC&D), Andrea Peres (RC&D), Dan Mullins (ECCD), Cynthia Rabinowitz (NWCD), Joanna Shapiro (NCCD), Jane Brawerman (RCCD), Cheryl Cappali (SWCD Board), Philip Trowbridge (Water Protection and Land Use Bureau- DEEP), Javier Cruz (NRCS).

#### **I. WELCOME**

Savageau opened the meeting with introductions.

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

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

Minutes of 04/24/19 were reviewed. Motion to approve with correction on date of event to August 14 on RC&D Report by J. Kaufman. J. Folger, second. Approved as corrected with one abstention (P. Trowbridge).

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

Treasurer's report for the 07/11/2019 meeting and adopted budget were reviewed. Motion to accept the financial report and place it on file by P. Trowbridge, 2nd by C. Rabinowitz. Unanimously approved.

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

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

The Election of Denise Savageau as Chair and Jeffrey Folger as Secretary-Treasurer of the Council effective July 1, 2019 was ratified.

Jeff Folger motioned to accept nomination of Jennifer Kaufman to Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded by Walter Smith and unanimously approved.

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

The Plan of Work for 2020 was presented, and a discussion followed. C. Lee is concerned with the time commitment for Objective B, action 2 and proposed to amend the language to "Establish a workgroup *in*

*coordination with DEEP to review and assess the CT's Storm Water Manual and CT's Soil and Erosion Control Manual. New proposed meeting dates to be added to the Plan of work. A motion to adopt draft with modification and new proposed dates was proposed by J. Kaufman, seconded by P. Trowbridge, unanimously accepted. Council members were asked to review the document for any other changes or additions. The POW will be reviewed at the September meeting for final adoption.*

#### **C. NRCS Cooperative Agreement Grant**

Morgart reported that the total amount available this year in CT for NRCS cooperative agreements is \$650k, lower than the 1MM initially estimated. He is meeting individually with each applicant, including the Council, to review their proposals and determine the exact amount of grant given the changes in the amount the NRCS must spend.

### **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. The biannual payments will continue. The Council submits all invoices and payments go directly to Council, CDs, and CTRC&D. Second invoice submitted in March 2019 for FY 2019, and payments have been issued. A new invoice for the FY 2020 will be submitted in September 2019. During the last Legislative Session, it was confirmed that P2P would continue to fund the Council and CDs for the coming year. Judy Blei is retired and contracted with the Council as an advisor and government liaison. An action item for the September Meeting is to provide a training session on the structures in our state: Conservation Districts, the CACD, NRCS, etc. and the relationships between their statutes.

##### **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. The Council will take the lead on the discussion and will create a Stakeholders Group to meet in early fall. A Committee was formed, and Lilian Ruiz and Amanda Johnson were asked to serve as co-chairs, and Cynthia Rabinowitz as member. DoAg was absent from the meeting but will be invited to have an active role in the committee. The goal of the Legislation on Soil Health should be to incentivize and include, not regulate and exclude.

#### **B. 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 impacts 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 and that it would be good for the Council to take the lead on this. We would need someone to lead this effort for the Council. The intent would be to host a workshop in the fall to provide training for growers on water conservation particularly catering to the needs of the Nursery/Greenhouse industry.

### **C. 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 and the first close should happen still in 2019. A Steering Committee Meeting was held on June 6, 2019.

### **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.

### **E. Executive Report**

#### **Pollinator Week**

Savageau reported that the Council secured the proclamation of Pollinator Week (June 17-23, 2019) by Governor Ned Lamont.

## **V. AGENCY REPORTS**

### **UPDATE**

- A. CAES: Abigail Maynard reported on the airline trail and statistics on mosquito trapping and arbovirus testing
- B. DEEP: Chuck Lee introduced Phil Trowbridge who is the new Assistant Director for Water Planning and Management. CT DEEP is in the process of hiring a new supervisor for the Watersheds Section.
- C. UCONN: absent.
- D. CACD: Denise Savageau reported on the above mentioned upcoming NACD Northeast Regional Meeting.
- E. NRCS: Morgart reported that NRCS is in the home stretch of obligating the Financial Assistance programs and moving towards closing out the fiscal year on September 30th. NRCS will soon be publishing in the Federal Register the interim rules for the 2018 Farm Bill. These interim rules lay out how NRCS plans to implement the 2018 Farm Bill. When the interim rules are published for each program it is important for everyone to read and if you believe something will not work in Connecticut or the Northeast, submit a comment on the language that you believe should be changed. This is your chance to comment on NRCS rules before they become final and are used to develop

program guidance. Please take the time to review the interim rules to ensure NRCS programs work for the agricultural producers in Connecticut and across the country.

F. FSA: absent

G. DoAG: Absent.

H. Governor's Appointee: No report.

I. Storrs Ag Exp. Station: absent.

J. NWCD: Rabinowitz reported. Proposed a Climate Change Symposium in June 2020. The proposal is supported by the Board.

K. CTRC&D: Amanda Johnson and Andrea Peres reported.

- Soil Health Workshop on August 14<sup>th</sup> on Silvopasture & Agroforestry 101 at Hidden Blossom Union, CT.
- Fall Farm Field Day showcasing no-till and cover crop equipment on October 2<sup>nd</sup> at Sub Edge Farm in Farmington, CT.
- New ERT Online coming soon
- Tour des Farms ride in Woodstock, September 21<sup>st</sup>
- Climate Symposium in 2020, Andrea and Cynthia are working on this.

## **VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -**

None.

## **VII. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:19 PM.