



# Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Gregg Schuster, First Selectman

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## AGRICULTURE COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

November 21, 2011 – 7:00PM  
Colchester Town Hall  
Room 3

### MINUTES

**Present** – Alex Savitsky, Dave Wasniewski, Joanne Becker, Elizabeth Gilman, Leslie Curtis, Jeff Savitsky (Alternate)

**Absent** – Andrew Lyons (Alternate)

**Others Present** – First Selectman Gregg Schuster, Joan Nichols, Chris Bourque, Matt Staebner, and other citizens

**1. Call to order**

First Selectman G. Schuster called to order at 7:08 PM

**2. Citizens Comments**

Chris Bourque commented on community support for the Agriculture Commission. Matt Staebner, Vice Chairman of the Franklin Agriculture Commission offered his support for the efforts of the commission.

**3. Discussion and Possible Action on Rules Governing Commission**

First Selectman G. Schuster outlined some of the rules governing the commission.

**4. Discussion and Possible Action on Bylaws**

Possibility of bylaws for the commission was discussed. No action taken.

**5. Discussion and Possible Action on Objectives of Commission**

The objectives of the commission were discussed. The commission wished to wait until a future meeting to decide upon their initial objectives.

**6. Discussion and Possible Action on Future Meeting Dates**

Motion by E. Gilman to hold regular meetings on 1/9/12 and 2/13/12 at 7PM at Town Hall. Seconded by A. Savitsky. Discussion on availability of members. Motion by E. Gilman to amend the main motion to hold regular meetings on 1/23/12 and 2/27/12 at 7PM at Town Hall. Seconded by A. Savitsky. Motion to amend carried unanimously. Main motion carried unanimously. Motion by L.

Curtis to approve remaining dates as presented with the exception of January and February. Seconded by E. Gilman. Motion carried unanimously.

**7. Discussion and Possible Action on Grant Application**

Discussion on grant application. Motion by L. Curtis to support the town efforts to promote agriculture and strongly support and endorse this grant application. Seconded by J. Becker. Motion carried unanimously.

**8. Election of Officers**

L. Curtis nominated E. Gilman as Chairman. Seconded by J. Becker. All present voted in favor of E. Gilman as Chairman. A. Savitsky nominated D. Wasniewski as Vice Chairman. Seconded by J. Becker. All present voted in favor of D. Wasniewski as Vice Chairman. A. Savitsky nominated L. Curtis as Secretary. Seconded by E. Gilman. All present voted in favor of L. Curtis as Secretary. E. Gilman was seated as Chairman.

**9. Adjourn**

L. Curtis motioned to adjourn. Seconded by J. Becker. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Gregg Schuster  
First Selectman

## **AGRICULTURE COMMISSION**

### **2012 Meeting Dates**

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of Each Month  
7:00 PM – Town Hall Conference Room

January 23\*  
February 27\*  
March 19  
April 16  
May 21  
June 18  
July 16  
August 20  
September 17  
October 15  
November 19  
December 17

\*date changed due to holidays

To: Agriculture Commission Members  
From: Adam turner  
Re: Agricultural Viability Grant Application  
Date: November 21, 2011

## MEMORANDUM

The Town is preparing to submit a grant application for funding from the State of Connecticut's Agricultural Viability Program in the next few weeks. The Town proposes to utilize an outside consultant to determine the economic impact of agricultural activities in Colchester. The report will also provide date and background information for the update of the Plan of Conservation and Development. The specific scope of work is as follows:

### Scope of Work

#### Item 1. Determine the Fiscal Value of Agriculture to Colchester

Quantify the economic contributions related to commercial agriculture in Colchester by conducting a Cost of Community Services Study (COCS) using the American Farmland Trust methodology, a Build-out Analysis and a Fiscal Forecast.

#### Item 2. Outreach to Stakeholders and Municipal Decision Makers

Hold a series of 3-4 workshops on the fiscal benefits of agriculture to the town as determined by the studies and that focuses on agriculture as a key component of economic development. Individual workshops will be given for the Colchester Land Trust, the Town's boards and commissions, and townspeople, which will be scheduled and promoted to maximize attendance. The report of the study's findings will be posted on the Town's website and sent to townspeople via an email from Town Administration.

#### Item 3. Plan of Conservation and Development and Land Development Regulations Update (to consider, develop and adopt regulatory measures related to agricultural preservation and promotion

Colchester's POCD is due for updating as required by Connecticut State Statutes. The current POCD states on page 24, "*Agricultural and Rural Features - Colchester contains numerous stone walls, barns, significant trees, and other features that contribute to community character,*" and on page 30, "*Colchester should, to the extent feasible, strive to preserve agricultural uses and prime agricultural soils.*" The Town would like to use this funding to hold public meetings for input on the value of agriculture to Colchester for inclusion in the POCD update. In addition, the COCS study, build-out analysis, and resulting fiscal impact analysis will be included in the updated POCD.

Hold an additional multi-town workshop to share the information with other communities and to discuss the application to their own town.

The Town will contract with Paula Stahl, a University of Connecticut faculty member, who has conducted similar studies and workshops. She will conduct the COCS study, build-out analysis and future fiscal impact analysis, draft a report of the findings, coordinate the planning for the workshops and present the Fiscal Benefit of Colchester's Agriculture at the workshops. For the past 10 years she has been grant funded by the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, The Last Green Valley, and confined to working within the 35 towns of the Corridor. In addition to assisting Colchester, this funding would enable her to reach a larger audience.

**Motion – We support the Town efforts to promote Agriculture and strongly support and endorse this grant application**