

Farmland Preservation Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
July 26, 2017
10:00 am
Southbury Training School Library
Southbury, CT

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Jim Zeoli, Henry Talmage, , Ben Freund, Terry Jones, George Hindinger, George Malia, Joe Bonelli

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Krissel, Robin Chesmer, Joan Nichols

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: Clark Chapin, Elizabeth Moore

- 1) CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Zeoli called the meeting to order at 10:15 am
- 2) REVIEW OF March 23, 2017 Minutes
 - a. It was moved by Mr. Freund, seconded by Mr. Jones, to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed **UNANIMOUSLY**.
- 3) OLD BUSINESS
 - i. DoAg updates
 1. Farmland Preservation Update
 - a. Commissioner Reviczky spoke about the status of the project pipeline, including occasional unavoidable issues that may come up from time to time.
 - b. Cam Weimar spoke about the process by which offers are made, accepted or rejected. Members asked questions about trends, and spoke about strategies to explain to farmers who may be considering the program and its benefits. Points of distinction were drawn between DoAg restrictions and NRCS restrictions.
 - c. Chairman Zeoli asked whether the Attorney General's Office had approved the template deed as to form yet. Cam reported that they had.
 - d. Mr. Jones commented that "agritourism" is a very broad umbrella, and agricultural entertainment is often misrepresented as agritourism.
 - e. Commissioner Reviczky suggested that he would benefit by having the FPAB opine on percentage thresholds and providing opportunity for farmers to remain viable while still respecting the limitations on the deed restrictions and statutory intent. Fairness and consistency is a key component to consider. The commissioner asked the FPAB to consider forming a subcommittee to work on this. Chairman Zeoli will poll the board and hopes to formalize something in September.

ii. State-Owned Farmland

1. Commissioner Reviczky noted that DoAg has two tenants on Savin Farm, but recreation activities taking place on the farm property are proving problematic. Gates have been installed to help protect the tenant farmers' interests. Agency staff are working to assess encroachment at Fairfield Hills. Five leases have been executed for periods of up to ten years at Southbury Training School.
2. DEEP has completed a dam restoration project on Savin Farm. DoAg has ongoing, long term responsibilities associated with the upkeep of the dam, as well as stewardship associated with recreational activities on the property.

iii. State Budget

1. Commissioner Reviczky went over the department's legislative accomplishments during the recent session, and explained certain aspects of the various budget proposals that remain under discussion.

- 4) Motion made by Mr. Talmage, seconded by Mr. Freund, to adjourn at 12:30pm. Motion carried **unanimously**.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason E. Bowsza
Office of the Commissioner