

**Town of Colchester  
Agriculture Commission Minutes  
September 20, 2021  
Meeting via Zoom  
Time 4:00 pm**

RECEIVED  
COLCHESTER, CT  
2021 SEP 27 AM 8:45  
*Gayle Furman*  
GAYLE FURMAN  
TOWN CLERK

**Members Present:** Donna Rosenblatt, Carla Roselli, Leslie Curtis

**Members Absent:** Tim Francis

**Alternates Absent:** Dave Wasniewski

**Liaison Present:** Rosemary Coyle

**Additional Boards/Commissions Present:** Mary Bylone, First Selectman;  
Matthew Bordeaux, Planning and Zoning Commission

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Donna Rosenblatt, Chairman, 4:08pm

**2. ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA:** Donna Rosenblatt requested that a motion be made that Chairman's Comments be included after Consent Agenda.

Motion: Leslie Curtis

Second: Carla Roselli

Motion unanimous

**3. CITIZENS' COMMENTS:** Citizen present: Jordan Malloy of Bacon Academy

**4. CONSENT AGENDA:**

**a.** Approve the Minutes of the April 19, 2021 Agriculture Commission Meeting. Motion Carla Roselli. Approve: Carla Roselli, Leslie Curtis, Donna Rosenblatt

**5. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS:** Chairman, Donna Rosenblatt spoke briefly on a few topics:

- a request for someone to volunteer to take the minutes
- reminder that motions or topics to be included on the meeting agenda should be submitted by 6pm on the Thursday prior to the meeting. Additions can be put forward on the day of the meeting during Additions/Changes to the Agenda.
- motions to be offered to the Commission should be accompanied with an Action Plan, briefly outlining the boards/commissions who may be involved, steps that might be taken and funding, if necessary. The Action Plan does not need to be complete; a rough draft is acceptable.

**6. PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION:** Matthew Bordeaux, Planning Director of Colchester Planning and Zoning Department, spoke again regarding the Agricultural Floating Zone and its impact on the community and existing farming in Colchester.

Currently, there are no applications pending to request consideration of Floating Zone. The Floating Zone has distinct, explicit size limitations.

The Floating Zone does not prohibit farmers from pursuing cultivation of any kind, as per Chapter 55 “Agricultural Business” of Colchester Town Charter if all State Licensing is obtained.

Mr. Bordeaux also updated us on the Open Space initiative presented by Commission Member Leslie Curtis.

Language has been drafted to amend Chapter 92 of the Town Charter, which addresses the Conservation Commission. This language is moving through pertinent Boards and Commissions.

**7. DISCUSSION:** How the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) recovery funding can assist Colchester agriculture recover from this continuing COVID economy. Mary Bylone, Colchester First Selectman, spoke briefly on the recent establishment of an *ad hoc* committee to address long-term recovery and temporary and permanent programs for the present and future. Ms. Bylone encouraged the Agriculture Commission to put forward ideas/projects to the *ad hoc* ARPA Committee, which will be available through 2023.

**8. DISCUSSION:** Agriculture Commission participation/endorsement/promotion of National Women in Agriculture Week, focusing on any local celebrations or events.

General discussion about the celebration was had. The actual date of the 2022 National Women in Agriculture Day is not known as yet, but historically is in March. Further discussions will be planned.

**9. OLD BUSINESS:**

A) no contributions were made by Ag Commission members regarding any information they may have received while sitting on various board/commission meetings

B) Rejuvenation of Farm to School Program. As of October 2020, the Farm to School Program was tabled until such time as the Board of Education feels the participation of the Ag Commission and Colchester farmers is required.

**10. NEW BUSINESS:**

**MOTION:** From Dave Wasniewski to form a “Small Farm Economic Preservation and Sustainability Committee” with initial focus on renewing earlier efforts to abate excessive farm taxes based on an earlier CCSS (Cost of Community Services Study). The goal is to replicate the successful abatement initiatives in Woodstock, CT and other CT towns.

Dave Wasniewski was not present, this MOTION to be carried over to next meeting.

**MOTION:** From Donna Rosenblatt to facilitate/create an agri-tourism webpage on the Town of Colchester website, highlighting Colchester farmers, equestrian, livestock, forestry, beekeeping and all other forms of agriculture.

Discussion ensued regarding departments to be involved, obtaining farm addresses, educational aspects, Capstone Projects and technical support. Financial support may be available through ARPA. Carla Roselli will assist in educational aspect.

Motion to Adopt: Carla Roselli

Second: Leslie Curtis

Motion carried unanimously

**10 ADJOURN:** Leslie Curtis motioned the meeting adjourned, seconded by Carla Roselli. Meeting adjourned at 5:09.

Respectfully Submitted by: Donna Rosenblatt, Agriculture Commission Chairman  
performing volunteer Secretary duties