

Berkshire Conservation District Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 5:30 PM
Remote Meeting
Add new number: Call-in number is 1(646) 876-9923. Meeting ID 132436088 #

Minutes from September 1, 2020 Meeting

1. Call to Order at 5:37pm, and Determination of Quorum

Present:

Supervisors: Adam Galambos, Ron Kujawski, David Ellis, Donna Kittredge, Ned Kirschner

Program Administrator: Cynthia Grippaldi

NRCS Representative: Gary Blazejewski

2. Public Comment Period

Adam checked the waiting room and no members of the public were present.

3. NRCS Report/Comments

- Gary reported construction inside the building is ahead of schedule. NRCS had a little money left over in their budget and were able to fund 4 to 5 additional projects. Nathan gets a lot of applicants and Lia Raz, a recent hire, will be working 50/50 and starting in Pittsfield on 9/14. She is a conservation planner with a background in agronomy. Speaking about some of the projects funded, Gary said there's a lot of interest in high tunnels as farmers want to extend the growing season. NRCS has funded several high tunnel projects and is interested in funding some different projects.
- Ron asked if anyone knew of alternatives to plastic mulch. Gary said there are conservation innovation grants that might fund a project relating to testing a relevant material. Ron said different colors of mulch are ideal for different plants but the only biodegradable products are black. Ned suggested we might want to grant fund with NRCS regarding a project on black plastic. We're keeping it as a topic for future meetings.

Adam asked Gary if they used all their funding for the year since that was mentioned during the August meeting. Gary said "yes" but they had a few hundred dollars left over and were able to fund a few additional projects. NRCS fiscal year is from October 1 to September 30.

Ned asked if Farmland Trust might advertise for us for supervisors. Discussion to be continued.

4. Secretary's Report — Submitted by Donna Kittredge

Ned motioned to approve the August 6, 2020 Meeting Minutes, Ron second. All in favor.

5. Treasurer's Report — Submitted by David Ellis

- See July Treasurer's Report for the numbers
- See August Treasurer's Report for the numbers
- Expense Payment Approval:
- Cynthia asked if there is an internet provider for the building and was wondering if BCD could share internet. Gary said every district has a separate WiFi unless you use a government

computer. Our WiFi is \$1,200/year which is expensive for the little use it gets now that Cynthia does most of her work at home. Adam will do some research on it.

- Ned asked if David could add the fiscal year to the top of the Treasurer's Report. He also asked if we have a second account with Greylock and we do. In order to have an account, we need a savings account that needs to have a minimum of \$5 in it. There was discussion about adding, over time, to our savings account in order to fund unforeseen repairs to the No-till machine, etc. All agreed this was a good idea and more fundraising was mentioned as a way to add to our savings.

- Ned motioned to approve the Treasurer's Report, Ron second. All in favor.

6. District Supervisors

- The discussion regarding the need for one of the supervisors to have access to the building continued. Ned started his application and will file the papers soon.

7. Program Status

- No-till updates for fiscal 2020: Cynthia met with Mike and got the paperwork from him. As of 8/31, Mike said he dropped the drill in Lee. It is getting used and is in good shape and Mike is using it at his place, as well. Mike said a farmer from Charlemont is interested and he is happy to deliver it. Cynthia has reached out to all districts around the county including NY and VT. David suggested giving some of our fliers to the Charlemont farmer to distribute in his area. Ned asked if the MA Farm Bureau could advertise our No-till for us.

- Nutrient Management: Cynthia updated our website and posted the one page fact sheets from MDAR and added the link to UMass soil testing. Ned, Adam and Cynthia will talk more about developing the Nutrient Management plan

- Pollinator Grant:

The Hinsdale Library is excited to be the recipient of a native perennial border thanks to this grant. Cynthia and Donna visited A Wing and a Prayer, a native plant nursery in Cummington over the weekend to view Amy Pulley's inventory. Areas for siting the border are under discussion and David Ellis will lend his expertise. Donna will be designing it and other supervisors and community volunteers will help with planting. Maintenance by volunteers will be monitored by BCD and presents an educational opportunity to help volunteers learn to identify native seedlings vs. weeds. Ned suggested keeping a tally of the number of volunteer hours put in and we plan to document the process through lots of photographs.

8. Program Administrator Update

- We will remove Housatonic Vally Association off the agenda until we receive an update later this season.
- Because Cynthia's request for reimbursement that was sent in April was received in July, she's sending them in monthly. 4-H lost their Berkshire county office and is now in Amherst.

9. New Business

The BCD Work Plan: Adam reorganized and presented the work plan. He asked us to voice our comments about the two mission statements — the one Donna wrote and Worcester's mission

statement. The draft Adam will produce for October will include all the comments from today. Ron and the group congratulated Adam on simplifying the plan as it will be easier to build on.

- Financial Action Items:

The group discussed the spring tree sale and fall bulb sale. It was determined that it has been a huge money maker (\$25,000, 20 years ago according to Ned), however, it is too late in the season to organize this. In recent years, Ned recalls that it brought in only 5-10K in profit. He thinks they didn't pay attention to the amount of material ordered (they order in lots) and ended up with too many leftovers. Ron asked if we have records of which specific products we sold. Ned will help by getting Cynthia in touch with some folks who helped in the past. Cynthia found some documents but others exist and need to be found. Dennis Mareb from Windy Hill helped in the past with suggestions for plant material. Ron will talk with Greg Ward and Dennis. Ned will get Amy Burdick's contact info as she might help. Ned said there should be a huge mailing list somewhere and thinks Mary was putting it together. Adam will show Cynthia how to use mail chimp.

- The scholarships: Adam went to 5 or 6 district sites and he wants comments.

- Cynthia asked Ned if an annual meeting is a requirement. At some point we need to vote for supervisors whose terms are up. Ned suggested if we don't have to have an annual meeting, let's not as we currently have so much on our plate.

- Changing the meeting time and day — Adam will be teaching Tuesday and Thursday evenings. He proposed we meet the first Wednesday of each month and change the time to 5pm. Next meeting will be on Wednesday, October 7, at 5pm. All agreed.

10. Comments and Announcements

- Adam asked if the blurb about the remote meeting format in the Agenda regarding Baker's rules is currently up to date. All supervisors agree that meeting remotely is working well. We agreed to try and limit as much face-to-face contact.

- Ned mentioned he went on the website and could not see the Agenda. Adam will help Cynthia tweak the BCD website files so it becomes visible. Also, Ned did not see the Agenda posted until Saturday and he thinks it needs to be visible two full business days before each monthly meeting. The question is if the Agenda is posted over the weekend, do Monday and Tuesday constitute two full business days? Adam will check the bylaws.

11. Motion to adjourn at 7:28pm by Ron, second by Ned, all in favor.