

**Berkshire Conservation District
Meeting Minutes for Thursday, April 14, 2022
Zoom Remote Meeting
Starting at 6pm**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87599054766>

Join By Phone: (301) 715-8592

Webinar ID: 875 9905 4766

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted via Zoom. All meetings of the Berkshire Conservation District are open to the public and are subject to Massachusetts Open Meeting Laws. Members of the public are welcome to speak only during the Public Comment Period. If you wish to make a comment, please use the “raise hand” feature. Please state your name and the town you reside in for the record. This meeting was recorded.

1. Call to order

At 6:04pm and determination of quorum.

Present: Supervisors: Adam Galambos (Chair), Ron Kujawski (Vice Chair), David Ellis (Treasurer), Donna Kittredge (Secretary)

Program Administrator: Cynthia Grippaldi

NRCS Representative: Sylvia Muniz-Gaya

2. Public Comment Period

No members of the public were present.

3. NRCS Reporting and Comments

Sylvia updated us on NRCS schedules and budgets. Their new staff member is completing her active training.

4. Secretary’s Report – Submitted by Donna Kittredge

Review and approval of March 2, 2022 Monthly Meeting Minutes. Ron moved to accept the minutes, second by David. All in favor.

5. Treasurer’s Report – Submitted by David Ellis

Review and approval of March 2022 Treasurer’s Report. See the March 2022 Treasurer’s Report. Adam mentioned our college scholarship will be disbursed in May. Donna moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report, second by Ron. All in favor.

6. Program Status

A. No-Till Program —

- Cynthia reported we’ve had a mini flurry of rental activity. She has spent much time investigating whether we need a plate for towing the No-till. She inquired at RMV, DOT, MDAR, and sent emails to Tom Anderson. Nobody seems to have an answer. RMV said

anything on wheels on the road needs a plate. To get a plate would cost about \$1,000 which is reimbursable. We are not eligible for a farm plate because we're not a farm. Adam does not want to put a liability on Mike and his family. We agreed that getting the plate will protect everyone if an accident occurs with the No-till on the road. It was necessary to vote for this expense. Adam proposed we follow the Smith Bros. Insurance model and get a stand alone plate for \$1,091, second by Ron. All in favor.

Regarding the No-till rental agreement, Adam and Cynthia modeled a revision to our rental agreement from last year that had been seen by an attorney. This year's changes are based on the Cheshire County Conservation District that also owns a No-till. It's a simplified page to make it a little less intimidating for the renter. A certificate of insurance was required last year and will be this year. We decided to put the revision out with no need for legal review. Cynthia is maintaining the rental calendar.

Adam and Cynthia will continue to ask Mike to attend the monthly meetings, and will ask for the maintenance schedule, and a forecasted budget.

B. Native Plant Pollinator Grant Program

- Lou gave an update. The plant sale information is on the BCD website. We still need to get the software which will tally sales. A percentage will be taken for each transaction. We have WooCommerce through our Go Daddy account. We will promote the Plant Sale through direct outreach, word of mouth, social media and will mail a promo postcard mid July.
- Red Shirt Farm in Lanesborough is interested in hosting a farm tour. We need farms that have native plantings to host a tour for a stipend.
- On Friday, April 22nd, Cynthia, Adam, David, and Donna will visit potential sites for planting a pollinator garden in North Adams. Adam spoke with Marie Harpin and MCLA alum Ben Lamb. He will meet with North Adams mayor Jen Macksey. We will present a sketch, a proposed budget, and in-kind hours.
- Town interest in adopting pollinator resolution — Monterey will vote during their annual town meeting on Saturday, May 7th to become a pollinator friendly town. David said the town of Washington has expressed interest. Ron is going to talk to folks in Stockbridge to gauge interest there.

Next month action item: Donna will look into the cost for purchasing a targeted mailing list for sending a couple of thousand postcards promoting our plant sale. After the site visit, Donna will develop a native plant list and sketch for supervisors to view during the May monthly meeting. A formal presentation will be ready to present to North Adams mayor by the end of May.

7. Program Administrator Update

Cynthia said a letter of inquiry for the EEA RFR is due on May 27th by 3pm for our next round of funding. The full proposal is due July 22.

Adam would like to reconvene to discuss the next round of funding and suggested we should consider that \$40,000 be dedicated to program improvement which would continue to support our no-till, and native plant pollinator initiative. Cynthia would like input from all of us for the letter of intent.

8. New Business

Cynthia's compensation — it was required that discussion be held during the open meeting format. Opening comments began with everyone feeling grateful and appreciative for Cynthia and her organizational skills. She continues to show growth in understanding what a district does. Her support has been a major asset to us. We all agreed we don't want to lose such a valued and trained resource considering it is an employee's market right now. It was put forth that if Cynthia wants to work more hours, she can choose to do so. We want to be sure we're compensating her adequately. Adam added that the district will pay for professional development and if there are things Cynthia would like to attend, the District will pay for it. Adam motioned to raise Cynthia's pay by 2.5% per hour retroactive to January 2022 and add 20 additional paid vacation hours, second by David. All in favor. Going forward we can review her compensation at the Annual Meeting and implement it on January 1, 2023. If Cynthia has other ideas for compensation (life insurance, simple IRA) she can bring those up to Adam in advance of her review.

Earth Day, Friday, April 22 — Cynthia wants to send out a newsletter and would like to include a photo of us meeting at the potential North Adams sites for the new pollinator garden.

9. Comments and Announcements

Adam said a workshop entitled Planning for the Future of Your Farmland for Berkshire MA farmland owners will be held at the First Congregational Church on May 11 in Williamstown. Featuring various speakers. Free of charge and dinner will be provided. Limited to 20 farmers plus 5 staff.

10. Adjournment

David moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:02pm, second by Donna. All in favor.