

BCD Annual Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2024 4:30pm

The Berkshire Conservation District convened on Monday, December 9, 2024 at 4:30 PM for our 2024 Annual Meeting via Zoom

1. 4:30pm - Call to Order, determination of Quorum

There was a quorum, and Adam convened the meeting at 4:38pm. Present: Adam Galambos (Chair), Ron Kujawski (Vice Chair), Donna Kittredge (Secretary), Ned Kirchner, Dave Klimowitz, Ambrose Clausen (Program Manager), Cynthia Grippaldi (District Administrator), Michael Leff (MACD), John Pitroff from Second Chance Composting, Jill Wenner, Amy DiGiacomo, Max Prum, Alyssa Vandurme, Lilliam Torres (Acting Conservationist for NRCS), Mike Balawender of New England Hay Supply. There was a roll call, and all supervisors were present.

2. 4:35pm - Welcome Message - Adam Galambos, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Adam welcomed all to the meeting, and welcomed John Pitroff from Second Chance Composting. Adam gave a brief background of the District. In 2019, we received grant funding and began a rental program with a no-till seeder. We hold an annual native plant sale and folks come from as far away as Sheffield and Williamstown. We did specific planting of native gardens. We are a small group of 6 people with limited funding. Adam made a plea for volunteers for supervisor and associate roles. He shared that without supervisors, we are unable to do the work we do. After 4 years, Adam announced he will be stepping down as chair of supervisors.

The Annual Report can be accessed from our website.

3. 4:45pm - Nominations and Election of Supervisors and Associates

There were no supervisors up for re-election.

4. 4:50pm - BCD Programming Presentation – Ambrose Clausen, Program Manager Ambrose gave a review of the 2024 programs. Partners who have helped him this year are Hampden Hampshire CD, Franklin County CD, BAV, American Farmland Trust, and Berkshire Natural Resources Council. He attended 13 events — conferences, breakfasts, and symposiums. NACD was particularly valuable in terms of meeting other conservation district folks and learning about the inner workings. Ambrose mentioned there have been over 1,000 views of Mike Balawender giving a full tour of the 5512 Esch drill. The 5512 drill was rented for 625 acres. The 5 years current acreage reading is 1,844 with 1.383 miles traveled per acre. The drill is also rented in CT and NY.

The 5607 no-till rental program — the funding contract was signed on June 28. The first rental was on 9/17/24. The caretaker used it on 10 acres on 10/18. Partners advertising the drill in 2025 are NRCS, BAV, AFT, and FSA.

Native Plant Sale — we offered 44 new species this year. We were able to donate several plants to farms for pollinator habitat. Holiday Brook Farm did an incredible job and opened their café for the event. The plant sale social media campaign was scheduled for 13 weeks of specific information on species, and there was a category covered each week. We received nineteen new followers on FaceBook, with 113 clicks through to our website. Our post sale survey included 51 customers with 30 responses which will be used to help choose plants for next year.

In November we submitted 2 grants, Basic & Innovation FY25 and HSAP Challenge Grant Round 2. Most of the planned events will take place before June.

Opportunities and Challenges are many as our grants have been delayed. Our spring will be quite busy.

5. 5:10pm - Keynote Presentation - John Pitroff, Second Chance Composting Ambrose introduced John Pitroff. He and his family tend to 18 acres and he has a background in forestry. They offer commercial food scrap collection, pick up of bagged leaves, xmas trees, hay, and manure. They sell the finished compost and they do a lot of community events including farmers markets and consulting services.

Mass DEP regulates what they do. They have a solid waste master plan, grants and work with CET and Green Team. Mass DEP Solid Waste Master Plan has a goal to reduce disposal statewide by 30% over the next decade.

6. 5:40pm - Questions and Answers

-Ambrose asked if all the farms in the county wanted to use compost, how much compost would be available? John said there is a big need for compost and with more mandates for disposing of outdated produce, more produce will be available to compost.

-Ron asked if Meadow Farm in Lee has facilities that accept food, and wood chips and if they sell the finished product.

-Adam asked what's the call to action for homes composting? John suggested building a pile about one cubic yard. The ration should be 3:1 brown to green, then turn every couple of weeks. One recommendation is to add enough carbon! Leave out meat and dairy as it will not break down quickly enough and animals could get to it.

-Cynthia recommended vermiculture

-Ned asked what the NPK ratings for the compost is and does it change between composting companies. John has not had his compost tested but said some operations test it and have the numbers on their sites.

7. 6:00pm - Strategic Program Assistant

It was decided that the next round of interviews for the Strategic Program Assistant will be in

person interviews.

8. 6:10pm - NRCS Report – Lilliam Torres-Santiago, Acting District Conservationist a.

Annual highlights — Lilliam has two planners assisting her.

b. Update on Pittsfield office support and staffing — with the new administration they don't know how soon they can fill the position. Lilliam will be the acting DC helping clients and getting payments to farmers. She will try to be at the office twice a week.

9. 6:15pm - Secretary's Report – Donna Kittredge, Supervisor, Secretary

a. Review and approval of November 2024 Meeting Minutes

Ron made a motion to accept the Secretary's Report, seconded by Ned. There was a roll call, and all were in favor. Adam made a motion to use time stamps in the agendas moving forward, Ron made a motion to accept, seconded by Donna. There was roll call, and all were in favor.

10. 6:20pm - Treasurer's Report – Submitted by Lynn Browne, Bookkeeper

a. Review and approval of Treasurer's Report — Lynn reported that our saving account is robust.

b. Review and approval of FY24 Audit by Adelson and Company P.C.

c. Review and approval of "Paid Note and UCC Termination Letter" from Greylock Federal Credit Union

Ron moved to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Ned. There was a roll call, and all were in favor. Ron made a motion to approve the audit report, seconded by Donna. There was a roll call, and all were in favor.

11. The next supervisor meeting will be held Wednesday, January 8, at 4:30pm via Zoom.

12. 6:30pm - Move to Adjourn

Ron made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:37pm, seconded Ned. There was a roll call, and all were in favor.