

Berkshire Conservation District  
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Meeting Minutes Monday April 7, 2025 starting at 4:30pm

The Berkshire Conservation District convened a Supervisors Meeting via Zoom. Members of the public were invited to attend via Zoom and were welcome to speak only during the public comment period.

1. 4:30 Call to order and Determination of Quorum - Adam Galambos, Chair

There was a quorum, and Adam convened the meeting at 4:34pm. Present: Adam Galambos (Chair), Ron Kujawski (Vice Chair), Donna Kittredge (Secretary), Dave Klimowitz, Max Prum, Jocelyn Latvalla, Ambrose Clausen (Program Manager), Cynthia Grippaldi (District Administrator), Lynn Browne (Treasurer), Jill Wenner (Strategic Program Assistant), and Kaliegh Walther (NRCS), Mariana Lachiusa, Mark Caldwell

2. 4:40 Public Comment Period

Mark Caldwell, member of the public, was present to listen to the meeting.

3. 4:45 Mariana Lachiusa, MACD Local Working Group Coordinator

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> for about 2.5 hours with an overview of program offerings. This meeting is for anyone involved with natural resources and their concerns and how NRCS may be able to assist.

4. 4:55 Report from NRCS Representative - Kaliegh Walther, Acting District Conservationist a.

Update on NRCS office staffing — they have expended all the equip funds for Round 2. The applications for Berkshire county are mostly forestry. Cynthia asked Kaliegh to define 'obligating contracts'. She said it is the process of taking each contract by itself and its expected cost and setting aside that amount. There is one full-time employee for Berkshire county. NRCS is dealing with significant staff loss.

5. 5:10 Secretary's Report - Submitted by Donna Kittredge, Secretary

a. Review and approval of the February 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Ron made a motion to accept the February 12 Meeting Minutes, seconded by Max. There was a roll-call, and all were in favor.

6. 5:15 Treasurer's Report - Submitted by Lynn Browne, Bookkeeper

a. Review and approval of Treasurer's Report

Adam asked what a prudent reserve would be for our books. He would like to see what the demand on cash flow would be throughout the quarters for cost on the machinery. Ambrose said his approach for

plant sale is to have more plants at a lower price point. Ron made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Jocelyn. There was a roll-call, and all were in favor.

#### 7. 5:20 Program/Grant Updates - Ambrose Clausen, Program Manager

a. Strategic Planning — Ambrose, Cynthia and Jill have been talking about long-term planning and grant opportunities and where we might be in the next 2 years. Jill added that the Annual Work Plan is not complete yet because we are inundated with grant data.

b. Program updates — revising compost and technical assistance. Ambrose would like us to make a motion for a certain pool of money for technical assistance. He is hesitant to add cash to the program based on us losing the grant. The program could use \$3,000 from FY24 Basic & Innovation Grant and compost suppliers would agree to put in an application to get \$200 to \$300 worth of compost. Ambrose would reach out to those producers and ask who are the customers who would benefit from this program. It would serve Berkshire farmers but there is one supplier in NY state.

Ambrose has upcoming events and Adam mentioned using Face Book as a way to reach out and create a calendar of these events. Ambrose mentioned it will be in the newsletter.

c. No-Till update — Ambrose has two rentals lined up this year for the larger drill. He's anticipating a low rental turnout because farmers will not be receiving funding, and fuel dollars will be pinched. He talked with Mike about reinstating the fees at \$10/acre and \$75/day which will take care of insurance and liability, caretaker fees, and some of the maintenance. It would not pay for his administration fee. Regarding marketing of the no-till, people find out about no-till rental by word of mouth. The postcards have not brought in any rentals. Our no-till rental opportunities are mentioned in our local partner's newsletters. He mentioned a follow up from the dinner they had in January. He's been working with Bart Niswonger to do a conversion from hydraulic to pto driven. Ambrose would like to give them a micro loan for \$7,000. It's for a new spreader for lime for north county farmers.

d. EEA FY25 B&I and Challenge Grant 2 status — we did not receive the Challenge Grant 2 which would have funded Ambrose until June and Jill for the time she has put in. We are still waiting to hear about the Basic & Innovation grant.

#### 8. 5:45 New Business —

a. BCD Mission and Long Range Plan review, discussion and vote — Jill mentioned that funding is considered in the document. Max asked how we will use this document. Jill explained that this document will be used for grant proposals, and the NACD grant required a long-range mission plan. It's a guide to help keep us on track and it includes the results from factual reports so we can see better into the future. Adam suggested it could be a template for other districts to follow. Ron made a motion to accept the document as our mission and long-range plan, seconded by Donna. There was a roll-call and all were in favor.

b. NACD Urban and Community Agriculture Conservation Grant Initiative application – still on hold  
c. MDAR MA Farmland Partnership Program RFR — Jill said this grant will allow us to partner with

collaborators. MDAR held two information webinars for staff. They can be found on MDAR's website. The application date is May 19. The applications are meant to be collaborative. It's a 2-year grant with available funding ranging from \$100K to \$1 million depending on the number of applicants, services and activities proposed. We need to figure out what tasks would work for BCD. Ambrose and Jill shared a screen presentation. There are specific tasks. Technical assistance in terms of farm viability might work for us. There is a specific structure and budget structure. We are narrowing it down with the specific skills that align with our values. We are starting to meet with potential partners. The key is there can only be one application, and we can partner with only one organization. Adam asked if we need any group meetings to assist with the grant proposals and Cynthia, Jill and Ambrose will be meeting at the office to discuss.

d. Long Island Sound Futures Fund RFR — we discussed if this might be an option but ultimately decided it does not fit without doing a major overhaul of our current plans. Cynthia said this proposal date is May 29<sup>th</sup> and the focus for Massachusetts involvement is fairly narrow.

e. Potential need of office/storage space if NRCS office becomes closed permanently — Adam suggested we keep an eye out for rental space. We have 2 large file cabinets and one small one. Lynn suggested we get a P.O. Box in Pittsfield.

f. BCC scholarship — we agreed to give \$250 to BCC towards their scholarship program.

g. FY26 \$600 Support of GBAC Pollinator/Edible Native Plant Project — Ambrose would like to support this project. A public benefit of the Plant Sale. Adam suggested we publicize it when it happens. GBAC will match the \$600.

#### 9. 6:10 Supervisor/Staff Comments and/or Announcements

##### a. Supervisor Committees

Max asked if BCD has committees. He expressed interest in joining a forestry committee. Adam asked if in creating committees we would be limited to supervisors or if we can include the public. We will explore this opportunity.

b. Schedule May Supervisor meeting — Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 via Zoom.

#### 10. 6:15 Motion to Adjourn Meeting

Ron made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:56, seconded by Donna. There was a roll-call and all were in favor.