

Berkshire Conservation District
Meeting Minutes for
Wednesday, January 3, 2024 at 4:30pm

The Berkshire Conservation District convened through Zoom. The general public were welcomed to join and make a comment during the public comment period.

1. Call to order and Determination of Quorum - Adam Galambos

Adam called the meeting to order at 4:30pm and there was a quorum.

Present: Supervisors: Adam Galambos (Chair), Ron Kujawski (Vice Chair), David Ellis (Treasurer), Donna Kittredge (Secretary), Dan Harris, Ambrose Clausen (Healthy Soil/No-Till Coordinator), Cynthia Grippaldi (Program Administrator), Lynn Browne (Bookkeeper), Kaliegh Walther (NRCS)

2. Public Comment Period

No members of the public were present.

3. Report from NRCS Representative

Kaliegh Walther was standing in for Sylvia and gave the NRCS report. Emily Marriott will be the acting DC while Sylvia is away.

4. Program Status

No-Till/Healthy Soils Program - Ambrose Clausen

-Debrief on the Meeting with Dicken Crane 12/26/23 at Holiday Brook Farm in Dalton: Cynthia, Ambrose and Donna met with Dicken to go over the project outline. Dicken has 10 acres available for testing. He has several grades of compost available. We talked about a timeline. Dicken has put together a number of testing options. He has been talking with John from Second Chance Composting, and they do a lot of outreach in the community.

-Ambrose gave us a general outline of several ideas for 2024 presentations. He's interested in cover crop or compost subsidies and continuing rental of the 12' no-till drill. Ron asked if there would be chemical testing for biochar residue and Dan said there is a long-term study that can give us information on that. Dan reached out to the US Biochar Initiative there are many levels of kilns ranging in price. David asked if we could purchase biochar already made and Dan said yes. Ron suggested since biochar is relatively new, we might look at this as a research project. Cynthia liked the idea of a hybrid proposal using existing biochar with the intention of purchasing equipment later.

-There was discussion about expanding the healthy soils program with the following thoughts: staff time, equipment (7' seed drill can cover smaller farms), subsidizing for spreading lime when necessary, biochar equipment, and other subsidies.

5. New Business

Consider a motion to submit a proposal in response to the EEA Challenge Grant RFR -David

made a motion to submit a proposal on strategic expansion of our no-till program with the HSP acquisition of additional no-till equipment and the partnership with Dicken Crane, seconded by Ron. There was a roll call, and all were in favor.

-Schedule Biochar tutorial for Supervisors — more info next month

-Spring 2024 webinar series (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May) Ambrose and Adam will talk more about his proposed speakers. Do we know healthy soil specialists on a national scale who, for a stipend, would speak? John Pitroff's name was mentioned (who is speaking on compost at BEAT).

6. Secretary's Report – Submitted by Donna Kittredge

Review and approval of December 6th and December 21st, 2023 Meeting Minutes David made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Ron. There was a roll call, and all were in favor.

7. Treasurer's Report – Submitted by David Ellis & Lynn Browne

Review and approval of Treasurer's Report — see the Treasurer's Report

Status of audit — Lynn said we are waiting for a letter of engagement. Payroll is being set up. Ron made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by David. There was a roll call, and all were in favor.

8. Supervisor/Staff Comments and/or Announcements

Cynthia asked if David was going to finish his term until March and he will get back to us. Ambrose said he would like to attend NOFA's winter conference.

9. Motion to Enter into Executive Session for the specific purposes outlined in MGL C30A S21. The Board will not reconvene in open session after the executive session closes. The meeting will adjourn promptly thereafter. At 7:05pm, David made a motion to enter into Executive Session, seconded by Ron. There was a roll call, and all were in favor.

11. Motion to Adjourn

Ron made the motion to adjourn Executive Session at 7:22pm. There was a roll call, and all were in favor.