

**Berkshire Conservation District
Agenda for Wednesday, March 2, 2022 5PM
Zoom Remote Meeting
Meeting Minutes**

<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 will be recorded.

1. Call to order at 5:09pm and Determination of Quorum

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

Program Administrator: Cynthia Grippaldi

NRCS Representative: Sylvia Muniz-Gaya

Guest presenters: MCLA students Andrew Ferrara and Eric Dupont

2. Public Comment Period

There were no members of the public present.

3. Report from NRCS Representative Sylvia Muniz-Gaya

Sylvia shared current NRCS activities. Cynthia asked what to do if farmers are interested in adding pollinator habitat to their farms. Sylvia said NRCS will take information and schedule a visit. NRCS programs are reimbursements, not grants. The farmer is responsible to complete their contractual agreement, NRCS certifies the work was completed, and the farmer gets payed for their out of pocket expense. In other news, on March 28, NRCS will welcome a new conservation planner. They will return to the physical office on May 2.

4. Secretary’s Report – Submitted by Donna Kittredge

Review and approval of Meeting Minutes from Jan. 5 and Feb. 23 Planning meetings. Ron moved to accept the minutes, second by Ned. All in favor.

5. Treasurer’s Report – Submitted by David Ellis

Review and approval of Treasurer's Report — see the Treasurer’s Report. The Zoom account expenses will go under a new line item #33 Computer Technology. We have not been reimbursed since November. Adam said Tom Anderson will return from vacation on Monday and he will ask about reimbursement. Ron motioned to accept the Treasurer’s Report, second by Ned. All in favor.

6. Program Status

A. No-Till Rental Program

I. Past month review

Ned remembered hearing complaints from Mike about skipping and seed not getting evenly distributed. He learned from the dealer that there is an upgrade to a new drive wheel because under certain conditions, the machine will skip. We can implement the new drive wheel if we are having problems.

David asked about the plate and insurance. Adam and Cynthia have worked with Thomas Gregory Insurance in Wakefield, MA. They suggest we should go through our liability insurance which is Liberty. It will cost around \$1,900 which is reimbursable but a big expense. Adam thinks it's the responsible thing to do. If we do this, we will be in the red this year. If we can take part of the Innovative Grant for 2023 as revenue for the No-till, that may be a prudent step. We might approach BAV to ask for supportive funding letting them know we have incurred expenses that were not originally factored into the operating cost.

Addressing stipends for No-till — Last year we had an Early Bird Special. We discussed offering two specials — \$50 a day and \$10/acre for new business and an Early Bird Special. David made a motion to make a \$10/acre reduction for Early Bird Renters through April 2022 and a \$10 reduction for new renters for the season. Second by Ron. All in favor.

We plan to hold public Q&A demonstrations for the No-till in May/June and August/September. We will choose a central location. Ned suggested we might get more people to the demos by offering pesticide credit. Ron said we need to go through MDAR to get authority to grant pesticide credits. Ron will reach out to Trevor Battle to discuss.

II. Next month action items — Cynthia, Adam and Ned will meet with Mike Balawender on 3/4/22 to review the caretaker agreement/contract, rental agreement form, rental return form. They will meet at Mike's place and inspect the machine as it's getting close to spring and check to see that the seasonal maintenance on the machine and that the rims were replaced.

B. FY22 Pollinator and Native Plant Initiative

I. Labor Day Plant Sale — we decided to do online ordering and will consult with Sitka Creations to update our website for ordering. Ned said people have always expected us to sell in the spring and he suggested doing a mailing to our mailing list supporting the fall Plant Sale. There is a line item for promotion expenses. Donna will work on copy for a postcard.

II. On-Farm Pollinator Habitat Promotion + Farm Tour — BAV reiterated that the \$3,500 they gave us is unrestricted for pollinator habitat on farms. Adam will reach out to ask Jim Schultz if he will host an event at his farm. Cynthia mentioned that Gould Farm is interested in implementing a pollinator pathway on their farm.

III. Community Pollinator Garden — Adam has been in contact with Marie Harpin, a city councilor in N. Adams. There's a tentative meeting next week with new mayor Jen Macksey. He is speaking with teachers about the education component.

IV. Pollinator Friendly Resolutions — Donna reported that Richmond needs to move the building time for their new town hall/library to 2023. She will continue discussion that they might still consider becoming a pollinator town. David talked with someone on the park commission in

Washington who is interested. Cynthia added Monterey is moving ahead at this year's town meeting.

7. District Administrator Updates

Cynthia reached out to Bee Friendly Williamstown and they want to help promote our programs. She will check on the progress of our audit. She attended an MACD Lunch Bunch and got some information on pollinator resources. The items on Adam's plate are the Annual Work Plan which needs review and get board approval, performance and compensation review for Cynthia, and RFRs which are going to be sent out next month.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Guest Presentation: Local Foods GIS Mapping Project by Andrew Ferrara and Eric Dupont of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. Adam was the instructor for their GIS class. They have created a project that is impactful and passionate about. Their project goals are to 1) provide a resource for Berkshire County residents to engage with local food producers, 2) highlight opportunities to establish greater food security here, 3) encourage consumers to rely on local resources and 4) create enthusiasm for small scale sustainable food systems.

After an impressive presentation, Adam suggested connecting Eric and Andrew with Vivian Orlowski and the Growing Better Committee. Ron is on the committee and said all the goals expressed at their first meeting have been answered by Eric's and Andrew's presentation. Ned suggested they have intellectual property that needs to be protected.

10. Supervisor/Staff Comments and/or Announcements

There were no comments or announcements.

11. Lou commented that the restructuring of the website looks good so far. Cynthia reminded us that starting on March 10th, she will be working remotely until March 31st.

12. Adjournment

Ron moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:06pm, second by David. All in favor.