

Berkshire Conservation District
Wednesday, September 8, 2021
Meeting Minutes 5pm
Call-in number 1(646) 558-8656. Meeting ID: 505 943 8770# Passcode: 12345

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5059438770?pwd=WmVVNXBzaTR3RVlXVTNqRnR5Sng0Zz09>

1. Call to order at 5:01pm and determination of quorum. Ron opened the meeting and Adam joined in at 5:15pm.
Present: Supervisors: Adam Galambos (Chair), Ron Kujawski (Vice Chair), David Ellis (Treasurer), Donna Kittredge (Secretary), Ned Kirchner; Associate: Mike Balawender
Program Administrator: Cynthia Grippaldi
 2. Public Comment Period
No members of the public were present.
 3. NRCS Reporting and Comments
Silvia Muñiz-Gayá, who is the new NRCS conservationist, is on deadline and will join us next month.
 4. Secretary's Report – Submitted by Cynthia Grippaldi
Review and approval of August, 2021 Monthly Meeting Minutes. David moved to accept the minutes, second by Ned. All in favor.
 5. Treasurer's Report – Submitted by David Ellis
Review and approval of August 2021 Treasurer's Report. See the August 2021 Treasurer's Report. David added a line item for Pollinator grant for the cost of printing the sign. Donna moved to accept the minutes, second by Ned. All in favor.
- A. District Supervisors
Last month, we decided that Adam would be the person to apply for supervisor access to the building. Between now and December is Adam's busiest time so he has to put the process on pause.
6. Program Status
 - A. No-Till Program —
 - a. Mike said the No-till is going to get a lot of use in the next 3 weeks. Birch Mill farm in Canaan CT teamed up with Laurel Brook (a massive dairy). Ziemba's in Cheshire used it for 22 acres. Mike will use it as he has a lot to put in the ground at his place in the next few weeks. There's one tentative farm in Chatham with 20-25 acres. There's a possible rental in Hawley. A farmer in Worthington wants to use it for half a day. It took Mike 4 hours to change a tire on the No-till when the rim blew out on the way to Worthington. We all agree that there should be a 10 acre minimum to make using the machine financially feasible. Ned said we need to be careful that the rental fee does not feel discriminatory. The cost is \$200 for a 10-acre minimum plus a delivery fee. Mike

suggested taking the 20-mile radius out of the rental clause because there are farmers close by who are easy to reach and he doesn't want to turn anyone away. Ron would like to see the rental policy amended with the new language. Cynthia will edit the rental agreement and send it to us for review.

- b. Tom Anderson mentioned an opportunity for grant funding to further support the No till. Adam will continue the conversation with Tom next week. We have very little money left to promote the program. Grant money would be used for advertising dollars and paying a person to market it in order to cover more acreage. Ron wondered if there might be a similar piece of equipment for smaller parcels. Cynthia thinks there is a hand powered seeder. Tom applauded our successes with the No-till and said it's talked about within various groups, although he sees it more as Mike's machine and there's lack of oversight from the board. We discussed if the No-till program need to be retooled. Should there be a grant to fully support Mike or someone in his role as Mike is doing it in kind? Ned added that our district had a No-till during the 70s which fell into disrepair.
- c. Cynthia wanted to discuss the insurance for the trailer plate which has been quoted at \$928.00. Mike has been fine putting his plate on it. We need to learn what Mike has for liability on his plate. We have a \$2 million general liability to cover the board. A farm plate is to be used solely by the farmer and we can't let someone else use that farmer's plate.

B. Nutrient Management Program —

- a. Cynthia composed and sent letters to 80 Berkshire farmers and 18 golf courses. The letter outlines the current nutrient management regulation (330 CMR 31.00), the reason for the regulation, and included the summary fact sheets (which are on our website). The purpose of the letter is to increase awareness of the importance of nutrient management, gain these groups as allies in best practices and offers the District as a resource. Ned asked if there is a way to find out who our ag producers are who farm 5 acres or less. Adam recalled a GIS analysis they used at BNRC. It wasn't geocoded so there were no addresses. There's a Berkshire Grown booklet describing locations but no acreage is mentioned. Ned suggested we send the info to farmers from Berkshire Grown's list. Adam mentioned Kiss the Ground Movie, (on Netflix) a movie on soil health. Adam reached out to them saying perhaps we could do a screening and they said we could screen it for free. If we do a webinar type screening, we could do a Q&A.

To do: Donna will discuss this with Adam and take over communicating regarding Kiss the Ground.

C. Pollinator Native Plant Grant Program

- a. If we don't get the grant, would we want to scale back the Plant Sale, or not do it next year? Ned said in the past, the Plant Sale event was funded through their operating budget and always made money but the last Plant Sale lost money because they overbought. Over the years, they were not getting a decent return vs. labor required to run it. Adam discussed with Tom if a supervisor could be compensated to be the Plant Sale coordinator and the answer was "no". We need to seek candidates for this position. Blast it on our social media and Mail Chimp.

To do: Cynthia will craft up the job description for this position for \$6,500 — based on 32 weeks at 8 hours/week. Once we hear back from Tom that we received the grant, we can

put out the ad.

- b. Ron said Stephen Herbert would be willing to give a talk at the Plant Sale event. Ned said that Kim Skyrms (MA State Apiarist/Apiary Program Coordinator) can speak about bee keeping for the Annual Meeting on November 3. David asked if it would make sense to coordinate with BEAT's Green Drinks.

To do: Adam will speak with Noah, Jane or Bruce at BEAT.

7. Program Administrator Update

- a. Cynthia is working on Nutrient Management letters. She is feeling like letting NE Grassroots grant go as we're going to be busy next year. We agreed to this.

8. New Business

The Annual Meeting will be held on November 3 at 5pm with Kim Skyrms as our keynote speaker speaking on pollinator health presented over Zoom and Tom Anderson will attend. We'll need to do our business first, then have the speaker from 6:00 to 6:30pm with a 45 minute Q&A.

To do: We will send out an Blast to make people aware of it.

9. Comments and Announcements

Adam shared some good news that BNRC closed on the Old Sheffield Water Company, a 400-acre parcel.

10. Adjournment

Ron moved to end the meeting at 6:55pm, second by Ned. All in favor.