

**WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

**Basement Conference Room, Town Hall
45 South Main Street, Wallingford, CT**

Thursday, January 18, 2024, 5:00 p.m.

MINUTES

[Minutes scheduled to be considered and approved at the next meeting]

NOTE: Last minute changes necessitated re-location of the Meeting from Room 315, Town Hall, as originally posted, to Basement Conference Room, Town Hall. Notice of this change was made visible in Town Hall.

Present: Chair Mike Miller, Vice Chair Brad Sammis, Jeff Borne, Dianne Lendler, Dianne Saunders, Jim Pyskaty, Conor Makepeace, Eric Severson, and Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner

Chair Miller called the Meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. and indicated the sole purpose of this Special Meeting, per the posted Agenda, was to review, consider, and act on the farmland bid proposals submitted by the January 9 bid closing date. He welcomed Bruce Conroy from the public to the Meeting.

Chair Miller asked Commissioner Saunders, Chair of the Farmland Lease Committee, to summarize the bid proposals received by the Purchasing Department and tabulated and posted that day so that the Commission can review them and make a recommendation to Town Council for the award of Town land lease areas.

Committee Chair Saunders reported on the bid proposals for 19 fields. There was one field which did not receive any bids, Field 14A, 205 Main Street, Yalesville, which she noted is far for most local farmers to get to and is wet. She noted a new bidder, J&J Brothers, LLC, from Meriden, who was the highest bidder for Field 7H, Maltby Lane, and for Fields 7B, 7C & D (bid together) off Anderson Road. She had done due diligence on the new bidder and found no concerns. She said the Farmland Lease Committee will arrange for a liaison and an orientation session with the new lessee she said after the bid is awarded and the lease signed. She and Ms. O'Hare commented on comparisons of bid rent amounts from today to rents from when these fields were last bid 10 years ago and Commissioner Saunders showed a comparison chart she

had completed. The ten years was because the lessees had been awarded a 5-year renewal of their respective leases after the first 5 year term.

Ms. O'Hare and Commissioner Saunders both reported that Andy Bozzuto, 3 B Ranch, had responded their requests and a letter sent for immediate attention to his lease areas to be completed – especially directed at the particular fields whose lease terms expired December 31, and he completed a great deal of the belated work, trimming back the edges of many of his fields. Commissioner Severson concurred. That put 3 B Ranch in standing to be considered for the new bids. Commissioner Saunders explained how field maintenance on steep and rocky areas of a field can be difficult to do well and how trimming affords the farmers more hay.

MOTION: J. Borne, To move that the Commission accept and approve the bids per tabulated sheet and recommend the Town Council award the bids for the fields in the 15 categories per the bid, 159 acres total

SECOND: B. Sammis

VOTE: Unanimous

Ms. O'Hare will send letter to the Mayor to be placed on the Town Council's next agenda for its consideration of the awards as recommended by the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Miller adjourned the Meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin O'Hare, Environmental Planner
Acting Recording Secretary