



East Lyme Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources

East Lyme Agribusiness Sub-committee

Meeting of Jan. 17th, 2018 at 6:30 PM

Held at East Lyme High School Cafeteria Commons 30 Chesterfield Rd., East Lyme, Connecticut 06333

MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order: The Jan. 17th 2018 meeting was called to order by Mark Christianson at 6:39 PM a quorum was present.

Members Present: Mark Christianson, Tom Kalal, Nancy Kalal, MaryCatherine Solomkin, Steve Dinsmore, Thomas Hall

Absent: Melissa Miko

Others Present: Bruce Solomkin, Denise Dinsmore

Delegations: None

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the Nov. 15th meeting were read and unanimously approved.

Old Business:

- Open Farm Day: East Lyme Day is 7/21 so Open Farm Day 2018 will be 7/22. So far Tim Londregan/Niantic Bay Shellfish Farm and Greg & Cassie Dubrule/ Blackhawk Fishing are participating. Sally Uden is going to approach Brubaker/ Rickety Picketts about being the 3rd farm on the tour.

Discussion about logistics of parking; Tom Kalal will talk to Parks & Recreation Comm. about reserving parking spaces at Cini Park for Blackhawk and Shellfish visitors. The lot closed early last year and feeling is we need to have someone there to make sure Open Farm Day visitors have access to / ample parking.

Discussion about using town's Hope St. parking lot (behind the Black Sheep Pub) and running a hay wagon between OFD sites. Concerns about traffic on Main St. (rte.156) prompted plan to use Hope, Grand, & Smith Streets as route.

FILED

Jan 23 20 18 AT 9:10 AM/PM

Kenneth Miko
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

- Beekeeping: Mark Christianson said he'd taken the 11-17-2016 draft of the proposed East Lyme beekeeping ordinance and it's incorporated CT Beekeeper's Association "Best Practices" to the E.L. Conservation Commission. The E.L.C.C. suggested that it include the scientific name of the bees (*Apis Mellifera*) or European Honeybee, and also, that under conditions under which limitations will not be imposed #2 be clarified as to what happens if undeveloped land converts to developed land. Consensus is that in such cases the beekeeper will comply with any restriction the new condition brings into effect. Steve Dinsmore said he will make those amendments to the ordinance.

Mark Christianson said he expects town planner Gary Geshall to get back to him about how to best proceed with zoning applications and especially waiver of application fees since we are a town committee.

- Harbor Management Report: Steve Dinsmore reports that there is a mediation meeting scheduled for Feb. 1st 2018 for Niantic Bay Shellfish Farms, several Waterford, CT agencies, and others. Mark Christianson reads a letter from the E.L. Conservation Commission in support of shellfish aquaculture in the Niantic River.

New Business:

- Organic Gardening Course: Tom Kalal said that on the recommendation of Lisa Picarazzi he has been developing a course in organic gardening that he, with the support of other Agribusiness Committee members could offer through the Parks & Recreation Commission. He proposed an 8 hour course to be divided into four 2 hour classes, and scheduled for March 6th 6-8PM, March 13th 6-8PM, May 19th 6-8PM, and July 14th 6-8PM. Enthusiastic discussion followed; Thomas Hall offered his help as did others, Tom K. outlined course as being two classroom sessions and two field sessions covering topics like soils, siting a garden, composting, seed selection, planting, watering, pests, harvesting, and storage. A \$95.00 fee for the course was agreed on with \$10 going to Parks & Rec. for administering the course. It was noted that East Lyme has lost farmland to development and that since many homes are located on "prime soils" they could be viewed as smallholdings and "backyard agriculture" on such sites would help mitigate the loss of agricultural land.
- A motion was made by Mark Christianson, seconded by Sally Uden to offer a course on organic gardening and to set the fee for it at \$95.00. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.
- Backyard Chickens: The Committee discussed the merits of promoting backyard poultry husbandry and decided to put it on hold for now so it could pursue organic gardening education with greater focus.
- Agriculture Viability Grants: Mark Christianson suggested that the Agribusiness Committee undertake an agriculture viability study and compile a report based on it's findings as other Connecticut towns have done. Discussion followed wherein it was noted that such studies typically find that agricultural land contributes more to the town in direct taxes than it costs in services whereas residential land often costs as much as 25% more in services than it pays in taxes. And that farms have direct economic benefits to other aspects of the town such as secondary businesses which benefit from agri-tourism and the pastoral beauty and open space maintained by the town's farms in fact works to support residential property values. Thomas Hall Volunteered to try and get copies of successful grant applications made by other towns to study in preparation of writing our own.
- Committee member Nancy Kalal was interviewed by high school student Nick Trakario who was seeking information about how regulations affect farms East Lyme. She said she thought his questions were astute and intelligent.

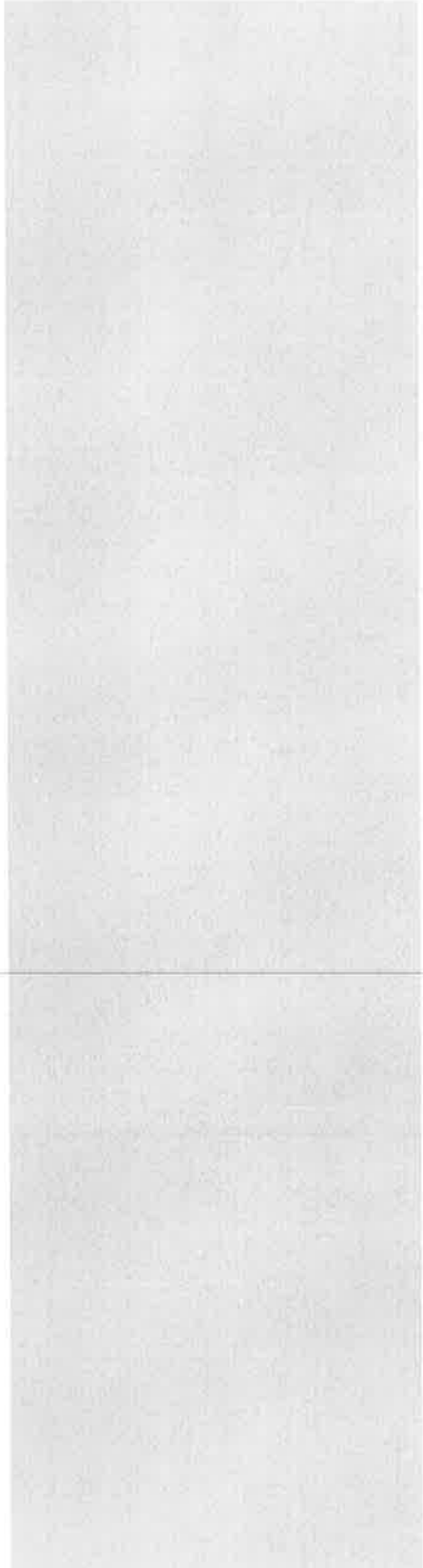
Comment [P1]:

Motion to Adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made by Mark Christianson at 7:42PM and seconded by Nancy Kalal. The committee voted unanimously in favor of adjournment.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Hall

Secretary



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