



Chairman
Bruce Garstka

TOWN OF LEDYARD CONNECTICUT

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Agricultural Commission

~ AGENDA ~

Joint Discussion / Regular Meeting

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex-Hybrid Format

REMOTE MEETING INFORMATION

Meeting ID: 860 8356 4094

Passcode: 180392

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86083564094?pwd=RY2VHtlcXz6JSct7wrwSEM6lc6zkia.1>

One tap mobile:

+16465588656,,86083564094#,,, *180392# US (New York)

Dial by your location:

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. JOINT DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE LAND USE DEPARTMENT (PLANNING & ZONING) AS WELL AS THE PLANNING & ZONING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INLAND WETLANDS/ WATERCOURSES AND CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS

1. Agricultural Commission Joint Work Session

IV. CITIZENS COMMENTS

V. COMMENTS OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

1. Comments of Commission Members.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Informational items.

VII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Motion to APPROVE Regular Meeting Minutes from September 19, 2023, as written.

Attachments: [AG minutes 9-19-23](#)

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Correspondence.
-

Attachments: [CT Farm Bureau EXPO 2023 11-8-23](#)
[USDA CT important farmland criteria update 10-2-23](#)

IX. OLD BUSINESS

1. Any other Old Business to come before the Commission.

X. NEW BUSINESS

1. Any other New Business to come before the Commission.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

DISCLAIMER: Although we try to be timely and accurate these are not official records of the Town.



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard
Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339-1511

File #: 23-2162

Agenda Date: 10/17/2023

Agenda #: 1.

AGENDA REQUEST
GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEM

Subject:

Agricultural Commission Joint Work Session

Background:

(type text here)

Department Comment/Recommendation:

(type text here)



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard
Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339-1511

File #: 23-2120

Agenda Date: 10/17/2023

Agenda #: 1.

AGENDA REQUEST
GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEM

Subject:

Comments of Commission Members.

Background:

(type text here)

Department Comment/Recommendation:

(type text here)



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard
Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339-1511

File #: 23-2121

Agenda Date: 10/17/2023

Agenda #: 1.

AGENDA REQUEST
GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEM

Subject:

Informational items.

Background:

(type text here)

Department Comment/Recommendation:

(type text here)



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard
Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339-1511

File #: 23-2163

Agenda Date: 10/17/2023

Agenda #: 1.

MINUTES

Minutes:

Motion to APPROVE Regular Meeting Minutes from September 19, 2023, as written.



Chairman
Bruce Garstka

TOWN OF LEDYARD

Agricultural Commission

Meeting Minutes

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex-Hybrid Format

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular meeting was called to order by Chairman Garstka at 6:01 p.m.

Also in attendance was Town Councilor Naomi Rodriguez.

Steve Martic was appointed as a voting member in place of Ms. Angelini.

Bill Thorne was late. He was appointed as a voting member in place of Russell Holmberg.

II. ROLL CALL

Present Community-at-Large Representative Michael E. Marelli
Farming Community Michael E. Marelli
Farming Community William Thorne
Alternate Member- Community-at-Large William Thorne
Farming Community Bruce Garstka
Chairman-Farming Community Bruce Garstka
Community-at-Large Representative Katie Yuhas
Alternate Member Steve Martic

Excused Farming Community Allyson Angelini
Farming Community Russell Holmberg
Farming Community Russell Holmberg

III. CITIZENS COMMENTS.

None.

IV. COMMENTS OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

1. Comments of Commission Members.

Mr. Marelli reported that he tried to speak to Land Use regarding the State Farm Land but their meeting was cancelled. He couldn't speak to Planning and Zoning. He will continue to try to speak to both groups and will report back next month.

V. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Informational items.

Chairman Garstka said he spoke with a renter at Firefly Farms in North Stonington. This farmer was a bit discouraged and commented that growing vegetables to sell at Farmers markets is more of a second job instead of primary income because it isn't steady income.

VI. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**1. Motion to APPROVE the Regular Meeting minutes from August 15, 2023, as written.**

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Michael E. Marelli

SECONDER: Steve Martic

AYE 8 Marelli Marelli Thorne Thorne Garstka Garstka Yuhas Martic

EXCUSED 2 Angelini Holmberg

VII. CORRESPONDENCE**1. Correspondence.**

Chairman Garstka shared correspondence from the CT Farm Bureau. He added that it is time to renew the Commission's membership. The cost is the same as last year; \$200.00. He asked if any Commission members did not want to renew, there were no objections. Chairman Garstka said he will go through the proper channels to submit the renewal membership.

Chairman Gartska commented on an article in the CT Farm Bureau correspondence on losing farmland. He said when farmland is taken over the developer strips and sells all the prime soil from the land before building on it. Even though the topsoil is being reused the parcel is lost as farmland. Chairman Garstka said it would be nice if there was a package deal requiring the developer to move the soil to another parcel making that parcel prime farmland. He used Anderson Oil's parcel in Preston as an example. Anderson property has a stockpile of loam on the land. Mr. Thorne agreed it was a good thought, as he has seen parcels with piles of stripped soil. Mr. Martic added that the cost of the soil sales is usually pre-factored into the developer's budget.

Mr. Thorne commented that Congressman Joe Courtney is trying to pass legislation to provide assistance to small farms. He asked if the Farm Bureau is involved in that. Chairman Garstka replied that he believed they are. Mr. Thorne added that the legislature needs to happen fast, not in five years.

Chairman Garstka would like to stress the following points during the AG Joint meeting next month on October 17, 2023-

- The State doesn't automatically purchase development rights for farms.
- The State may not even accept the land if given to them at no cost, because of the responsibility to oversee the farms.
- Ledyard is not high on the State's target market, because the State is mainly interested in large

- parcels of farmland, preferably ones that abut another farm parcel.
- Local level will need to be the focus in saving farm development rights.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Agricultural Commission Website discussion.

Ms. Yuhas reported that she has a meeting scheduled with Justin Dube, MIS Director, to discuss the Commission's website.

2. Any other Old Business to come before the Commission.

Chairman Garstka met with Mayor Allyn III to discuss the possibility of Avalonia changing their mission statement to include an agricultural offshoot instead of exclusively passive recreation. Mr. Marelli added that approximately 32% of the Rowley Property on Stoddards Wharf Road is prime or State important farmland.

Councilor Rodriguez shared her experience with Avalonia; she has Avalonia property in her neighborhood, after a storm some trees fell, she asked Avalonia if residents in the neighborhood could cut the fallen trees which were blocking the side of the road where people walk. Initially Avalonia said no but then agreed to cutting only what was blocking the walkway. Avalonia said they like to leave trees where they have naturally fallen. A member from Avalonia came to supervise the residents cutting and removing the tree.

Mr. Thorne said there is a lot of land in Ledyard that is under Avalonia's supervision. He would like to see someone from the Town be involved with Avalonia. Chairman Garstka said this would also be a good topic to bring up during the next joint meeting.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. Any other New Business to come before the Commission.

Chairman Garstka, said on a side note he went to a Ledyard High School reunion at Blonder's Park. The reunion was for any Ledyard High school alumni that has been out of school at least 50 years. The Reunion Committee would like to reserve Blonder's Park Pavilion on the third Saturday in July in hopes that several people will come back for a reunion, which could be an economic generator for Ledyard. He also heard several people say that Ledyard still has that small town feel which he was happy to hear.

Ms. Yuhas asked what the agenda was for October's meeting. Chairman Garstka said during the joint meeting, he would like to talk about the Town's development rights (Town options vs. the State's) and the AG Commission's website update. Ms. Yuhas suggested inviting someone from Avalonia to the joint meeting, other members thought it was a great idea. Councilor Rodriguez said she would contact Steve Lang from Avalonia..

ACTION ITEM:

Contact Avalonia to ask if a representative would be available to present and answer questions at

the Agricultural Joint Meeting on October 17, 2023.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to ADJOURN the Regular Meeting at 6:31 p.m.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Michael E. Marelli

SECONDER: Steve Martic

AYE 8 Marelli Marelli Thorne Thorne Garstka Garstka Yuhas Martic

EXCUSED 2 Angelini Holmberg

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TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard
Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339-1511

File #: 23-2119

Agenda Date: 10/17/2023

Agenda #: 1.

AGENDA REQUEST
GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEM

Subject:

Correspondence.
CT Farm Bureau EXPO on November 8, 2023.

Background:

(type text here)

Department Comment/Recommendation:

(type text here)

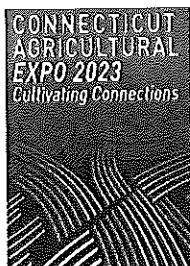
CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPO 2023

Cultivating Connections

Register today!

Wednesday, November 8th, 2023
8:00AM - 2:00PM
Aquaturf, 556 Mulberry Street
Southington, CT

Sponsored by
/ The Connecticut Farm Bureau
The Connecticut Department of Agriculture
Farm Credit East, ACA
UConn Extension



Wednesday
November 8th
8:00AM to 2:00PM

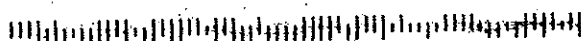


- Expo showcasing the latest in ag innovation, farm equipment, tractors, farm implements, seed & crop protection products, farm supplies & services
- Networking
- Buffet Lunch
- Connecticut Wine & Beer Samples
- Taste of Connecticut
- Pesticide CEU credits
- \$60 for CFBA Limited & Standard Members
- \$75 for Non-members

Roxanne Maher
Ledyard Agricultural Commission
741 Colonel Ledyard Hwy
Ledyard, CT 06339

To register or for more information - email
traceym@cfba.org, call 860-768-1100 or cfba.org

Connecticut Farm Bureau
78 Beaver Road, Suite 2A
Wethersfield, CT 06109





September 25, 2023

TO: Town of Ledyard
First Selectman's Office and/or
Conservation Commission
741 Col. Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339

RE: CONNECTICUT STATEWIDE IMPORTANT FARMLAND CRITERIA UPDATE

To help maintain the productive capacity of American agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed criteria and guidelines to inventory important farmlands. Earlier this year, Connecticut NRCS proposed to update its farmland designation criteria for *Farmland of Statewide Importance* to allow for "not more than 3 percent of the soil surface is covered by stones 10 in (25 cm) to 24 in (60 cm) diameter." This change would allow for some *very stony* soil map units to be designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance. The result of these changes is a more equitable designation across Connecticut, as these designations are used to assess eligibility and ranking for certain USDA program benefits. Further, the new designations are consistent with criteria/designations in other states of our region such as Massachusetts.

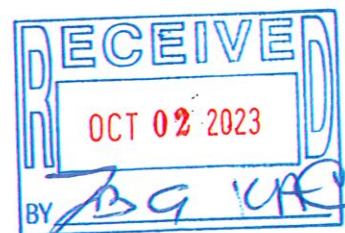
The proposal was accepted following notification to the State Technical Advisory Committee and a 30-day comment period. Edits reflecting this criteria change were made to the farmland designations in the official soil survey data for the State of Connecticut. The new version of soil survey data will be published in late-September 2023. Official soil survey data is available from Web Soil Survey.

These farmland designation criteria changes result in the following changes to the Soil Survey of the State of Connecticut:

- 339,153 acres changed to Farmland of Statewide importance.
 - Some of this acreage was previously designated as *Locally Important Farmland* in select towns including Ledyard. **This change to Farmland of Statewide importance supersedes the Locally Important Farmland designation, resulting in a more equitable designation across the state as these designations are used to assess eligibility and ranking for certain USDA program benefits.**
- 8 map units currently designated as Locally Important Farmland in select towns would *not* be changed to Farmland of Statewide Importance, so the Locally Important designation would not become obsolete as a result of the proposed change.
 - These unchanged map units are associated with bedrock-controlled landforms. Connecticut and Massachusetts currently have consistent farmland designation criteria as related to amount of bedrock outcrop/exposures.

Natural Resources Conservation Service
344 Merrow Road, Suite A
Tolland, CT 06084

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- Please see the attached proposal correspondence from March 2023 with supplemental figures and tables that illustrate and detail the changes that result from the proposed surface stoniness criteria change.

Changes to Local Important Farmland lists in Ledyard:

The soil map units listed in Table 1 were designated in Ledyard as Farmland of Local Importance in previous versions of the Soil Survey of the State of Connecticut:

Table 1. Soil Map Units changed from Farmland of Local Importance (in Ledyard) to Farmland of Statewide Importance

Soil map unit symbol	Soil map unit Name
44B; 46B; 46C; 51B; 61B; 61C; 67B; 85B; 85C	Rainbow silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony; Sutton fine sandy loam, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Canton and Charlton fine sandy loams, 0 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Canton and Charlton fine sandy loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony; Narragansett silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Paxton and Montauk fine sandy loams, 3 to 8 percent slopes, very stony; Paxton and Montauk fine sandy loams, 8 to 15 percent slopes, very stony

The soil map units listed in Table 2 were designated in Ledyard as Farmland of Local Importance are unaffected by this year's farmland designation criteria change:

Table 2. Soil Map Units that will remain designated as Farmland of Local Importance in Ledyard in the updated version of the Soil Survey of the State of Connecticut

Soil map unit symbol	Soil map unit Name
73C; 74C	Charlton-Chatfield complex, 0 to 15 percent slopes, very rocky; Narragansett-Hollis complex, 3 to 15 percent slopes, very rocky

This change in designation from Farmland of Local Importance to Farmland of Statewide importance has no adverse effect to Ledyard town citizens applying for USDA benefits or related conservation benefits from partner agencies that use USDA farmland classification data. This correspondence letter functions to provide transparency regarding changes to the town's Farmland of Local Importance list, and no action is required on behalf of the Town of Ledyard.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Jacob Isleib at jacob.isleib@usda.gov.



Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Isleib".

Jacob Isleib
State Soil Scientist, Connecticut & Rhode Island
US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Natural Resources Conservation Service
344 Merrow Road, Suite A
Tolland, CT 06084



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard
Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339-1511

File #: 23-1847

Agenda Date: 10/17/2023

Agenda #: 1.

AGENDA REQUEST
GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEM

Subject:

Any other Old Business to come before the Commission.

Background:

(type text here)

Department Comment/Recommendation:

(type text here)



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard
Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339-1511

File #: 23-1848

Agenda Date: 10/17/2023

Agenda #: 1.

AGENDA REQUEST
GENERAL DISCUSSION ITEM

Subject:

Any other New Business to come before the Commission.

Background:

(type text here)

Department Comment/Recommendation:

(type text here)