



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Agricultural Commission Meeting Minutes

Chairman
Bruce Garstka

Regular/Joint Meeting

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex-Hybrid Format

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Chairman Garstka at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

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

Also in attendance was Karen Parkinson and EDC member name????

III. JOINT DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF VARIOUS COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES AND BOARDS THROUGHOUT THE TOWN OF LEDYARD

1. Agricultural Commission Joint Work Session.

Karen Parkinson gave an update on the Tri-town Trail and the Historic District Commission:

Tri-town Trail Update:

After two years of waiting for a grant extension, it was approved. The Committee is working with the Hagen Farm family for trail access through the property. There are 17 heirs, so it could be a lengthy process. The trail is very clean of trash. The counter was destroyed by vandals, but each October they do a census and collect comments. The information is helpful for writing grants. Avalonia is working on a water preservation grant to purchase the Rally property which will give access straight to 214. They would like to make it a preserve in the name of Gabe and Winnie. Mayor Allyn III supports purchases or easements.

Historic District Commission:

The Spicer Homestead Ruins were discovered at the top of Geer Hill while they were working on the trail. One goal of the Commission is to preserve that homestead because it appears untouched since it was abandoned. They have had State Preservation Officials acknowledge that it deserves recognition and could potentially have federal recognition. The benefit of preservation is that no one can vandalize it or do digs. It would also allow for signage and

additional education. There are a network of walls and a dwelling. It was once referred to as the “mansion”, as the house expanded in the early 1700s to accommodate their growing children. The Commission is also maintaining the Nathan Lester House, the Up Down Sawmill, and the Ledyard Center Schoolhouse. The Commission is currently full and has great attendance.

Chairperson Marelli gave an update on the Conservation Commission.

Conservation Commission:

On the 27th there is a trail task force that meets 2-3 times a year between committees to coordinate projects, standardize trail markings, and create connectivity. The Commission has been working with Avalonia to determine which properties they should focus on for expansion and connection. The Commission are also working on their Sustainability CT Certification. The Commission is in the process of reviewing and updating the Conservation Commission’s page on the Town's website. The Town is also updating their Town website, and a draft should be coming out soon for comments. The Town’s POCD is coming up, and they are interested in an outside consulting firm. The Commission has been reviewing for when they seek input.

Improvements to Glacier Park parking area include removing invasives. Bill Geer is going to regrade to reduce mud holes. The Commission is continuing to work with Avalonia and attended the Mystic Water Shed Alliance meeting to distribute information. Herring Alewife count is happening now to collect statistic information on the watershed, which is helpful when seeking funding. The Commission nominated Maggie Ferretti of the 2026 Mystic Watershed Alliance for the Aquarian Water Environmental Award. At the June meeting there will be a visitor from Trouts Unlimited to discuss riparian buffers.

The Inland Waterways and Watercourse Commission:

The Commission is busy, there are several applications which can't be discussed while they are pending.

America 250:

The Historic District Commission is trying to identify all the homes in Ledyard that were standing during the American Revolution. The count is between 45-72 currently. The idea is to have all of them hang bunting and create a linked map where you can drive by and read about each one.

Economic Development Committee:

They are waiting for the budget to pass to start the Rt 12 project. The Committee is also working on a new business directory. The Committee is having a ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday at 10:00 a.m. for a new mini market plaza opening.

Sustainable CT Committee:

Promoting the CT Visit.com state website for tourism. You can create an account and manage your own listing.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

IV. CITIZENS COMMENTS

None.

V. COMMENTS OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

1. Comments of Commission Members.

Mr. Thorne is hoping AG and Land Use will have a tent at the Farmers' Market on June 24th. They need people to come and explain what various Commissions/Committees do. Mr. Thorne will set up a tent and tables. The Farmer's Market Commission is working with the Ledyard 250 committee to plan a celebration at the July 1st Farmers' Market. The Commission is collecting ideas to go with the Red, White, and Blue theme.

Mr. Thorne asked about the property on Shewville Rd between Iron St and Rt 2. It's labelled as the Historic Society but he's unclear who maintains it, as it has fallen into disrepair. Near Whitehall Preserve. It's overgrown. Mr. Marelli says it falls under the Conservation Commission. There is mowing scheduled for the fall after bird nesting has completed. The Commission alternates fields when mowing takes place under a management plan.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Correspondence.

None.

VII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Informational items.

Mr. Holmberg thinks the members of the AG Commission should be aware that there is a multi-generational farm that is working to expand and was shut down by the Town. It seems there was an issue with Wetlands due to land clearing, Agriculture has the right, but they need to apply for a permit. The Commission will look for ways to support them.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Motion to APPROVE Regular Meeting Minutes from April 21, 2026, as written.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Bruce Garstka

SECONDER: Michael E. Marelli

AYE 7 Angelini Yuhas Martic Garstka Holmberg Thorne Marelli

IX. TOWN COUNCIL LIAISON REPORT

1. Town Council Liaison report.

Ty Lamb, Town Councilor was not present.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

X. OLD BUSINESS

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

Mr. Garstka visited the Mayor's Office and was told that the RFP should be going out for Clarke Farm. It was approved by the Town Council.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

XI. NEW BUSINESS

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

Chairman Garstka and Councilor Lamb met with the BoE and superintendent about improving outreach with the AgriScience program. They proposed a calendar where farms could list projects that they are doing and create opportunities for students to engage. Even if it was just once a month it would improve connections and community.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to ADJOURN the Regular Meeting at 7:10 p.m.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Bruce Garstka

SECONDER: Katie Yuhas

AYE 7 Angelini Yuhas Martic Garstka Holmberg Thorne Marelli

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