



TOWN OF LEDYARD

Agricultural Commission

Meeting Minutes

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Chairman
Bruce Garstka

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex-Hybrid Format

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Garstka called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

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

Also in attendance was Karen Parkinson, Tri-Town Trails.

Ms. Parkinson and Mr. Martic were present via Zoom.

Mr. Martic was appointed as a voting member.

III. CITIZENS COMMENTS

Karen Parkinson said she found some State of Connecticut Agricultural Grant opportunities that the Commission might want to consider. One of the grants is for \$5,000 and the other is for \$50,000. Grant applications can be submitted for three years in a row. Ms. Parkinson sent the grant information in an email to Chairman Garstka.

IV. COMMENTS OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

1. Comments of Commission Members.

None.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Correspondence.

None.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Informational items.
None.

VII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Motion to APPROVE Regular Meeting Minutes from October 21, 2025, as written.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Bruce Garstka

SECONDER: Michael E. Marelli

AYE 5 Yuhas Martic Garstka Holmberg Marelli

EXCUSED 2 Angelini Thorne

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

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

Clark Farm Property -

Chairman Garstka asked if the address number "1025" was correct, Mr. Marelli confirmed that it was. Chairman Garstka spoke with Mayor Allyn III regarding the proper approach and agreed he that creating a set of bullet points to recommend to the Town Council as criteria was appropriate.

Chairman Garstka said during the last Commission meeting the members agreed that haying was the least obtrusive use of the land.

Chairman Garstka wrote a draft of criteria combining a mixture of the minutes from the last meeting and an email from Mr. Marelli.

The Agricultural Commission is setting forth a list of criteria that may be helpful in securing a new lessee for the 102-acre Clark Farm Property, and the 42-acre at 1087 Colonel Ledyard Highway. The Clark Farm has prime farmland soils, and the 1087 Colonel Ledyard Highway Property has a deed restriction attached stating that the property may be used for agricultural purposes.

Our objectives are to keep the properties:

1. In agricultural use
2. Keep invasive plants from encroaching into the fields
3. Reduce/eliminate invasive plants
4. Maintain soil health.

To accomplish these, we recommend the following before a lease agreement is signed:

1. The land shall be used for the production of hay only.
2. Any change of crop must be approved beforehand in writing.
3. The fields must be mowed at least yearly with a mowing height of a maximum of eight inches.

4. Any crop harvested hay may be stored on site at a location chosen by the Town.
5. No harvested hay may be stored over one year and all harvested hay must be removed at lease end.
6. All necessary insurance is to be in effect for the term of the lease.
7. A five year lease renewable term is preferable.
8. Lessee must have a proven track record.
9. Lessee must have a means to fulfill lease terms.
10. References must be provided.

As a Commission, we feel that the production of hay would have the least impact on the land while keeping it in agricultural use for generations to come.

Chairman Garstka said the Commission may want to add something regarding fertilization and lime.

Chairman Garstka said he doesn't want to get too in depth at this point but wants to get Land Use on board and the for the new Town Council to start thinking about it. Mayor Allyn III said the best time to submit the list would be in January.

Chairman Garstka said he would also like to add that the lease would free up town resources from maintaining the fields.

Chairman Garstka said he spoke with Christina Hostetler, Town Hall Assistant who said that the Commission should have a new Liaison appointed in December. The Commission hopes to have more participation with the new Liaison.

Mr. Holmberg asked how the list compares to the one in Lebanon. Chairman Garstka answered that it is similar.

It was decided to add something regarding finances. Chairman Garstka suggested "fee based on work to be done" or "fees to be determined".

A renewable five-year lease was suggested.

Chairman Garstka said he will write another draft and ask Ms. Hostetler to forward it to the Commissioners for review.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

IX. NEW BUSINESS

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

Chairman Garstka said he attended the Ledyard High School Agri-Science open house with Mr. Marelli which was a very good informational event. It was the second year Chairman Garstka attended. Chairman Garstka said that Mayor Allyn III owns a field which he lets the department use to raise cows for beef that is donated to the Ledyard Food Pantry. This is their fourth year. Perhaps hay from Clark Farm could be used by the Agri-Science department. Ms. Yuhas suggested that someone from the Agri-Science Department attends one of the Commission's meetings. Chairman Marelli and Chairman Garstka agreed that the students are very dedicated. There may be opportunities within the Commission for the students to volunteer and/or attend meetings.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to ADJOURN the Regular Meeting at 6:35 p.m.

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Bruce Garstka

SECONDER: Katie Yuhas

AYE 5 Yuhas Martic Garstka Holmberg Marelli

EXCUSED 2 Angelini Thorne

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