

Minutes Durham Agricultural Commission February 17th, 2026

7:00 pm Town Hall 2nd floor

Meeting called to order by Chairman Randy McLean at 7:09pm

Roll call: Bob Miller, Jessica Augur, Melizza Dziurgot, Matt Dziurgot, Susan Cummings, Hillary Lisowski Miller, Warren Herzig, Randy McLean - all present

Seating of alternates: none seated

Melissa D. made a motion to approve the agenda as presented 2nd Bob M. ALL AYES motion approved unanimously.

Public comment: none

Motion to approve the minutes from the January 20th meeting made by Jessica A. with the edit to the spelling of the name Hillary to add two ll's. 2nd by Hillary M. All AYES with Warren H. abstaining. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business: Discussion on the Ag Commissions process of contacting Durham's agricultural properties gauging interest in the Durham Farm Map. Jessica A. noting roughly 11 properties have confirmed definite interest. Some properties have already submitted their social media, property descriptions, and updated contact information to be listed on proposed Durham Farm Map.

New Business: Update on the DOAG Grant, the due date for the DOAG Agricultural Enhancement Grant was February 2nd. Chairman McLean thanked Jessica A. for her work on submitting the grant January 30th on behalf of the Durham Agricultural Commission. Jessica A. noting that Chairman McLean met with multiple vendors to obtain quotes for the grant proposal, and the towns Finance Director along with the First Selectman. The four parts of the application were successfully submitted which included a project presentation, budget (digital print/design), grant narrative, and attachments with letters of recommendation. The Commission obtained three printing/design proposals, one came in at 2954.00, another for 3500.00. and the last at 2500.00. The Ag Commissions final grant submission entered their Printing and Design cost for the proposed Durham Farm Map asking the State of Connecticut for 2889.00 (with the state paying 75% reimbursements) up to 5000.00. Discussions on proposals and responsiveness of the State of Connecticut contact person during the grant submission. Jessica A. noted they had several questions for the State of CT grant contact Alison Grabarz relating to W9 tax forms, who signs for a municipality, the difference in "cash in kind match" or donated services, and who is

considered Subcontract/Consultant with expenses falling under “Grant Funds Requested” given the different quotes for proposals received. Jessica A. also contacted the State of Connecticut grant contact via email on guidance around proposed design/printing company as a contact person there is an alternate member of the Durham Agricultural Commission. Guidance provided via email from Grant coordinator to enter the quote as a “subcontractor under grant funds requested”. Discussion on asking the First Selectman to review the Ag Commissions proposed design/printing company and if needed have the Board of Selectman/ First Selectman send a letter asking the Ethics Commission to weigh in appropriately. Chair McLean stated the notification for grant awards occur around March 9th, 2026. Notification will be sent to the Durham Board of Selectman with the First Selectman listed as our contract signer. If awarded, continued work on Durham Farm Map to begin on April 1st, 2026. Discussion on where Durham Farm Map would be distributed, some ideas included the Durham Rec Center, Library, or during the Durham Fair. Members discussed the potentiality of having a table set up at the Durham Fair to distribute information allowing interaction with participating farmers and the public. Ideas around farm locations hosting open houses as an additional layer of interaction. Discussion on proposed Durham Farm Map unveiling event similar to the Guilford Farm Map event. Ideas around planning an event, what that might look like, timing, and potentially using the town green, asking farmers to donate their space, or coordinating with the Durham Fair venue during fair time. Hillary M. noted we can apply to the same DOAG grant next year for event costs. Discussion on general state of CT grant applications, user friendly/ ease of this DOAG grant application specifically noting the grant timeline opens for applicants around the holidays and closing within 30 days as a considerable factor. Jessica A. remarked the application was helpful in so far as it could be started and saved and worked on in measurable chunks of time rather than one sitting. Chairman McLean noted there is a group in Haddam that helps with grant writing. Discussion on creating a document to share with Ag Commission members for future applications now that we have completed our first. Discussion on Durham Agricultural Commission contact/email listing on The Town of Durham website as inactive/ inoperative. Requests for new email submitted in the past, and suggestions to reach out to the town’s executive administrative assistant for new email for Chair of the Ag commission as the Agriculture@townofdurhamct.org does not currently work. Warren H wondered if the Right to Farm logo could be added to the proposed Ag Commission logo. Hillary M. suggested the Durham Ag Commission logos be numbered so we could vote on one as a group at another meeting. Chairman McLean noted the Connecticut Compost Alliance has a conference March 19th 2026 at Wesleyan University for a full day conference dedicated to compost, soil health, and resilient systems. Registration is online at ctrcd.org, ctcompostalliance.org with a suggested donation of 20\$. Warren H. noted that the Halfinger Farm open house is coming up on April 18th, 2026. Halfinger Farm

is located at 489 Candlewood Hill Rd. Higganum CT. They are also hosting a living history day at the daffodil farm on the 18th 11:00 am-3:00pm (with the open house at the greenhouse.) They are also hosting a River Valley Farmers meet and greet on the 18th for local Agricultural folks in the area from 1:00pm -3:00pm. The farm has a social media presence on Facebook as well. Motion to adjourn made by Jessica A., 2nd by Hillary M. Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.