



**AGRICULTURAL  
COMMISSION  
FOR THE TOWN  
OF EASTON  
CONNECTICUT**

**Commission  
Members**

**Jean Stetz-  
Puchalski, Chair**

**Victor Alfandre,  
Recording  
Secretary**

**Lori Cochran  
Dougall**

**Laurel Fedor**

**Irv Silverman**

**Alternates:**

**Ray Longo**

**Minutes -Regular Meeting of the Easton Agricultural Commission  
December 12, 2018 7:30 p.m.  
Easton Town Hall Meeting Room A**

In attendance: Ray Longo, Jean Stetz-Puchalski, Irv Silverman, Lori Cochran Dougall

**Minutes from Last Meeting:** Motion to approved minutes from last meeting by Irv Silverman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ray Longo.

**Farming Project on Town Land:** Second full lease of the Farming project on Town Land at SSES has been completed. Sport Hill Farm has completed their lease requirements, including preparing the field for the next Farmer. Exit survey and schedule an exit interview with Sport Hill Farm. Sport Hill Farm is not submitting a new proposal and thanked the commission for years of support. The commission plans a special acknowledgement of Sport Hill Farm in thanks for the years of great work and dedication as our first farmer to participate in the project. Jean Stetz-Puchalski coordinated with First Selectman's office to confirm moving forward with the project. New RFP and applications required for the new lease period. Discussed changes to RFP. Jean to submit revised copy for review at BOS meeting on 12/20 for immediate public notice and posting.

**Approved Meeting Schedule for 2019:** Approved meeting schedule for 2019. Motion made to change meeting time and location by Irv Silverman. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ray Longo. Motion passed. New meetings will be held at 7:45pm the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at the Easton Library Community Room, however, January 9, 2019 meeting will be held at Town Hall meeting room A. Victor Alfandre will file schedule with Town Clerk.

**Easton is the Christmas Tree Capital of CT:** Discussed Easton is the Christmas Tree Capital of CT project. New signage and logo are seen all over Town. Commission thanked Lori Cochran Dougall and team for outstanding work on this project.

**Easton Farm Map:** Jean Stetz-Puchalski reported her work updating the Easton Farm Map published by the Easton Garden Club will be completed in the Spring. Jean will utilize the new Easton is a Christmas Tree Capital of CT logo in place of the Christmas tree icon currently on the map to honor the new designation.

**POCD:** Victor Alfandre represented the Ag Commission at the P & Z Town meeting and entered into record the recommended changes to the draft of the POCD. Commission resubmitted edits - see attached memo. Lori Cochran Dougall coordinated up with P & Z to confirm receipt and answer any questions. Recommendations accepted by P & Z.

**Mental Health Awareness Initiative for Farmers:** Lori Cochran Dougall recently co-organized a mental health awareness /suicide prevention event for chefs and asked the commission to support a similar event for farmers as part of a collaboration with the Ag Commission, CT NOFA and FC Farm Bureau. Motion made to support and partner on this event by Lori Cochran Dougall, second Irv Silverman. Motion passed. Lori to represent the Ag Commission with support from all members.

**Filling Vacant seats on the Commission:** Laurel Fedor has resigned from the commission. Members thanked Laurel for her years of service. BOS to make new appointments in January. Matt of Speckled Rooster Farm on deck for appointment. Motion made to recommend BOS move Ray Longo from alternate to full member of Ag Com by Irv Silverman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lori Cochran Dougall. Motion passed. Jean to email BOS with the recommendation. Lori to meet with First Selectman to encourage immediate appointments to help fill vacant seats.

**Approval of Annual Report copy for submission:** Discussed edits. Motion made by Irv Silverman to approve. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ray Longo. Motion passed.

**Motion to adjourn** passed at 8.35pm. Minutes taken by Ray Longo and submitted by Victor Alfandre *Victor Alfandre.*



INSTR # M2019000013  
DATE FILED 01/07/2019 12:51:29 PM  
CHRISTINE HALLORAN  
TOWN CLERK EASTON CT

To: Easton Planning and Zoning Commission  
From: Easton Agricultural Commission  
Re: Proposed Revisions to POCD  
Date: November 10, 2018

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Proposed revisions to the POCD:

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Easton has a strong agricultural history and agricultural activities continue to play an important role in the community. The Assessor's database suggests that about 2,049 acres in Easton are receiving the "farm" use assessment. While not all of those acres are being farmed, it can be viewed as an indication of the prevalence of agricultural activities in Easton.

*Easton also has a vibrant agricultural present. More acres are actively farmed today than a decade ago with more immediate social and economic impact. Easton citizens rely on Easton Farms for access to locally grown produce, agricultural supplies, and community meeting places year-round. Multiple community projects focus on highlighting Easton agriculture. The Garden Club's Farm Map (map. p 23) states "Easton is a Farmers' market"; the Annual Farm Tour draws hundreds of tourists and prospective home owners to Easton every August; and the recent launch of "Easton: The Christmas Tree Capitol of Connecticut" campaign. Easton farmers now sell to local restaurants in every surrounding town. Young families are moving to Easton for the opportunity to grow and purchase locally grown food. Easton also has a bright agricultural future. It is the only town in Fairfield County with an Agricultural Commission. Farming is the town's only major industry and represents both an economic and marketing opportunity for the town in its effort to attract residents.*

The POCD recommends that agricultural activities continue to be encouraged, supported, and supplemented.

Addition of timeline adding to the history you have listed in the margin:

{Following the 1985 entry...}

Easton Adopts State Agricultural Tax exemptions – PA 490 (CGS 12-107c); Property Tax Exemption for Farm Machinery and Farm Buildings CGS Section 12-91;

Easton Farm Map + Tagline "Easton is a Farmers' Market" created and published by the Easton Garden Club, 2010

Easton Farm Tour launched by Citizens for Easton, 2010

Easton Agricultural Committee formed, 2012

SSES Farming Project on Town Land, 2013

Easton Ag Commission established by Town Ordinance, 2014

Easton Right to Farm Ordinance established, 2015

Adoption of 1-1(q) of the Connecticut General Statutes definition of Agriculture, 2015

Local Important Farmland Designation by the United States Department of Agriculture, 2016

Locally Important Farmland Soils map, 2016

Cooperative Agreement signed for the Joint Partnership of the Farmland Preservation Program between the State of Connecticut, Department of Agriculture, and the Town of Easton, 2017

"Easton is the Christmas Tree Capitol of Connecticut" designation, 2017

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FARMS – Easton intends to:

1. Support and encourage the continuation of agriculture as an economic activity in Easton. AC
2. Continue to use the Public Act 490 "farmland tax valuation" program to encourage the retention of working farms. Staff
3. Consider providing for additional property tax exemptions for agriculture as provided in the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS Section 12-81 related to property tax exemptions and CGS Section 12-91 related to farm buildings). AC BOS TM
4. Work with local farmers and others to identify other mechanisms to support farmers and farming and preserve agricultural lands, including allowing other activities to enable farmers to supplement their income. AC PZC Staff
  - o a. Consider modifying the Zoning Regulations to allow minor non-agricultural uses (such as hayrides, corn mazes, etc.) on working farms in order to complement their agricultural activities. PZC
  - o b. Consider modifying the Zoning Regulations to allow major non-agricultural uses (such as health and wellness spas, retreats, weddings, workshops, classes, etc.) on working farms under certain situations. PZC
  - o c. Consider modifying the Zoning Regulations to allow farm wineries, breweries, and/or distilleries and accessory uses under certain situations. PZC
5. Encourage the retention of quality agricultural soils for agricultural use. AC PZC Staff
6. *Continue* working with public and private conservation organizations to acquire easements or development rights to one or more existing farms in Easton for leaseback to owners or qualified farm managers. AC Staff
7. If development is proposed, use techniques such as "conservation development" to help preserve working farms and help preserve prime or important agricultural soils that could be utilized for commercial farming.