

**Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting of the Easton Agricultural Commission**  
**Wednesday, September 9, 2020 – 7:45PM**

**Meeting held via Zoom**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86210982338?pwd=RnBuZ25mZ0lzZGZXUnF5ZnNIL3k2Zz09>**

**Meeting ID: 862 1098 2338**

**Passcode: 987935**

**In attendance** Jean Stetz-Puchalski, Matt Oricchio, Irv Silverman, Denise Hebner, Victor Alfandre, Lori Cochran Dougall

**Absent:** Sage Rega

1. Meeting called to order at 7:35pm
2. Minutes from last meeting approved unanimously.
3. Public Comment - none
4. Discussed Ag Com Covid-19 advisory activities helping Town, farms and farms and farm stands to adapt to changing conditions. We are hearing success stories during this challenging growing season. Our farms are thriving. Farms are continuing to strictly align with Connecticut's COVID-19 safety guidelines and restrictions. We continue to keep Farmers, Town government and our public facing page on the Town website updated.
5. Discussed Farmland Preservation Fund and use of fund in support of an application for the permanent preservation of an Easton farm. Jean Stetz-Puchalski continues to meet to review use of fund and procedures. The question of adding the Ag Com as advisors to the fund was discussed as at the time the fund was established in 1985 the Ag Commission was not yet established. In 1985, the Conservation Commission best fit the role and was named as advisor.
6. Conservation Agriculture and Ecotype Project tabled until October meeting.
7. South Park Advisory Committee report on viability of farming Hops made by Victor Alfandre. I interviewed a couple hops farmers about the idea of growing hops for the profit of the town on the South Park property.

Summary of Victor's findings:

- there is a substantial initial investment in equipment to grow hops
- price for harvest varies by as much as 100% year over year.
- no real market for organic hops due to the difficulty of getting any of the other beer ingredients organically.
- most brewers want pelletized hops. This either reduces profit by up to 20% or requires another expensive purchase of equipment.

The overall feeling was that IF there was a way to minimize or even eliminate labor costs, then it could be profitable over the long term. Our own discussion as a commission concluded that this was not a good idea to pursue.

8. No Correspondence
9. New Business – Farming on Town Land at SSES. New farmer needed to take over lease.
10. Adjournment to executive session at 8:30pm. No vote took place.

Submitted by Victor Alfandre *Victor Alfandre*

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CHRISTINE HALLORAN TOWN CLERK EASTON CT