

Business Plan Team for Center for Community Agriculture (CCA)

Agriculture Commission AD HOC

November 7, 2013- 10:00 to 11:35

Session THREE

Attending: Linda Stuhlman; Marianne Halpin; (Peter Dean was unable to attend due to family commitment)

Minutes were read and reviewed and accepted.

Attendees discussed the Ag Ad Hoc field trip to Rosedale Farm in Simsbury, CT. This farm is considered to be the only actual HUB type farm in CT according to Kip Solinskas of the Farm Trust. This unique farm was in the Epstein family for years and is now part of a Simsbury land easement with the Simsbury Land Trust. It was decided to discuss the farm at the next Agriculture meeting so Ag Commissioners could benefit from the information learned.

Linda attended a 5 hour session at the Extension Center regarding the new FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT that was passed by Congress in 2011 and introduced by Rosa Delora in 2009. While this extensive Food Safety ACT is now law, it is currently under the RULES phase which will end on November 16, 2013. Several heads of Agriculture Departments in the State of CT were present and spoke to a crowd of approximately 200 farmers. The Department heads were most concerned about this new law and how it would strongly affect the welfare of farmers and farming/processing programs. Farmers voiced their concerns and were likewise distressed. Linda spoke with Diane Hirsh, R. D., M.P.H., Cooperative Extension Educator Foods, Nutrition, and Food Safety, following the informational meeting. Ms. Hirsh suggested she visit the East Haddam Agriculture Commission and discuss how this law will affect the processing and farming project. Ms. Hirsh suggested she and Mr. Bonelli could visit and discuss pertinent information on Food Safety and Risk Management planning. Linda obtained a copy of the power point presentation that afternoon and emailed it to the Selectman and all Ag members to review.

A reservation was secured for Ag Commission to visit Greenview Mass, Franklin County Community Development Center, (<http://www.fccdc.org>) on Wednesday December 4, 2013. Dates for White Gate Farm, (<http://whitegatefarm.net/whyorganic.php>) and Massaro Farm (<http://www.massarofarm.org/wp/learning/>) visits are in discussion.

AD HOC attendees discussed the positive progress made to date with the business plan development. The Business Plan Summary, Mission Statement, Goals, is being finalized. Home research on Regulations, Marketing and field visits is performed each week.

In Session TWO, attendees developed an *at-a-glance* category listing priorities for project development.

As follows:

1. Processing

New barn

Certified kitchen

Education

Jobs

Organic processing

2. Community Farms

Rental farm plots

Greenhouses

Storage of produce

New, young farmer start-ups

Local food bank

Recreational

Jobs

Food security

Hub events

Organic farming

3. Goals

Incubator for Ag business

Education and training facility

Goals cont.

Support growth for local employment

Support growth of local Agri business

Provide a food system

Composting

Grazing town emergency center

Education opportunities

Improve the business environment for farms and ag

Promote food security

Rental and repair

5. Benefits:

Decrease carbon footprint

Limit sprawl

Preserve EH rural character

Reclamation of historic farmland

Utilization of prime farmland soils

Controlling invasive exotics

Advancement of food security for EH area residents

Serving as a model for Open Space

The next step:

- PICK FOUR TO FIVE GOALS
- ALL MUST BE JOB CENTERED
- ALL MUST BE INCOME PRODUCING FOR THE CCA
- STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENT THE GOALS
- EXPENSE PROJECTION TO MEET GOALS

During the Agriculture Commission meeting on Nov. 4th, Peter Simmons from the EDC, and author of the STEAP GRANT Proposal, stressed that the most important priority regarding the GRANT is JOBS.

The following are the drafted FOUR GOALS for the Business Plan.

- A REGIONAL INCUBATOR TO GROW AGRICULTURE RELATED JOBS AND BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY.
- TO PROVIDE A CERTIFIED KITCHEN FOR PROCESSING AND OTHER, THAT WILL BE RENTED FOR COMMUNITY USE AND IS FEE BASED.
- TO SUPPORT NEW AND YOUNG FARMERS THROUGH AGRICULTURE RELATED EDUCATION AND FARM DEVELOPMENT.
- TO PROVIDE LAND AND AGRICULTURAL SERVICES TO FACILITATE AGRICULTURE GROWTH.

AD HOC members further discussed preliminary short-term job related possibilities and how the kitchen will produce jobs. Questions to be defined:

Who will use the kitchen?

What will they produce?

What kind(s) of processing?

Will kitchen be strictly organic or open to traditional processing and use?

Fees for kitchen and possible membership for the community

Field rental

These areas will be explored in detail in upcoming sessions.

Session FOUR Agenda:

-Kitchen research and job possibilities. Kitchen operation outline. How to tract jobs spin offs.

-Market research: gathering any and all materials from field trips/ workshops attended by any planning members.

Investigating other entities in New England with certified kitchen rentals.

-Ideas for getting Marketing started now.

- Ad Hoc members to track their expenses and time devoted to business plan development.

Submitted by: Linda Stuhlman