

**Our Town-Our Future  
Minutes  
Core Committee Special Meeting  
Via Virtual Meeting  
December 5, 2022**

1. **Call meeting to Order** at 8:03 pm
2. **Members Present:** Ray Fenn, Maureen Hanink, Gwen Haaland. Mike Gantick  
**Guests Present:** Luther Brauch, Doug Jenne, Loretta Wrobel, Jeff Silver-Smith, Cathryn Silver-Smith, Janet Bellamy, Stephanie Dubinsky, Bill Dubinsky, Alex Hastillo, Joan Nichols, Nick Weinstock, Steve Morytko
3. Moved item 5 **New Business**
  - a. **Discussion with Joan Nichols, Director of the CT Farm Bureau-** L. Wrobel introduced Joan Nichols who provided an overview of challenges and new approaches to helping make farming in Connecticut continue to be viable. J. Nichols opened it up to questions. Question on viability of the new Smart Farm technology and impacts on water, electricity and soil. J. Nichols and L. Brauch explained that this approach uses about 10% of the water of conventional farming of same crops. With recent annual cycle of drought, floods, drought this approach is somewhat isolated from those weather extremes. With the Food Safety Modernization Act there is a federal push to utilize well water versus surface water sources for irrigation. Also Produce Safety Rule establishes for the first time , science based minimum standards for the safe growing, harvesting and packing of produce. One of the things J. Nichols and her team did was to push the state Legislature for proving Virtual Net metering for farms. While there isn't necessarily a statewide Master Plan for Farming, J. Nichols said listening to the needs and challenges of the Farmers guides what to do next. Ct business environment presents a challenge to farmers but with a new \$14 million Climate Friendly grant , there are opportunities this year to try new things and move some farm projects forward. New seed varieties, plant germination and soil practices, along with water conservation techniques are all things that are being explored as ways to reduce costs, improve efficiencies in farming operations.  
Towns for their part can remain supportive of the changing technologies in farming, State has 73,000 acres under LI sound which constitutes the state's largest farming operations.  
The attendees thanked J. Nichols for taking the time to attend this gathering and provide some greater insight into the state of farming here in Ct.
4. **Approval of Minutes-November 7, 2022** – Motion by M. Hanink. Approved 3-0-1.
5. **Communications and Announcements**-none
6. **Old Business**
  - a. **November Leadership Meeting Follow-up-** discussed the positive input and energy from the 24 people that attended the meeting. Some great ideas were identified. Need to keep the positive , momentum going. B. Falletti had mentioned at the meeting that a goal will be to re-contact some of the groups that weren't able to attend and have a follow up session early next year. M. Gantick emailed committee his raw notes from the meeting and asked members to provide any addition info/feedback they have. Goal is to get notes out to attendees of the Leadership meeting next week.

- b. **Project Updates**- none
- c. **New Member Recruitment** –please continue to seek out new members

**7. New Business**

- a. **Discussion with Joan Nichols, Director of the CT Farm Bureau**

**8. Input from Public**- see above

**9. Member Input for Next Agenda**- next meeting will finalize some information on Leadership meeting so can get into February Citizen.

**10. General comments**-none

**11. Adjournment at 9:19 pm**

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