

# PRESS RELEASE

February 23, 2015

Town Planner's Office

## Town of Ellington

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### TOWN PARTICIPATES IN FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM TO PRESERVE MCKNIGHT FARM!

**Ellington, CT** – February 23, 2015 – First Selectman Maurice Blanchette and Commissioner of Agriculture Steven K. Reviczky announce that the Town of Ellington and the State of Connecticut recently completed the joint acquisition of development rights for a local farm – the McKnight Farm. This acquisition represents approximately 122 acres, generally situated in the northwestern section of Ellington on the easterly side of Green Road and the northerly and southerly sides of Muddy Brook Road, owned Jeff T. McKnight. Ellington's participation is possible by a farmland bond authorized by Ellington voters in 2007. The preservation of the McKnight Farm represents Ellington's fourth joint acquisition with the State of Connecticut and increases permanently preserved farmland since 2007 to over 350 acres.

Ellington First Selectman Blanchette said, "The voters of Ellington re-affirmed their commitment to farmland preservation by approving at Town Meeting the purchase of development rights to the McKnight Farm. This was done in partnership with the State of Connecticut, with Town funding from a \$2,000,000 authorization by voters some years ago. Now that contracts have been executed to make this a reality, the McKnight Farm joins a number of other Ellington farms that have been preserved in this way. With the continued support of its voters, I expect that the Town of Ellington will participate even more in farmland preservation."

McKnight Farm is located in an agricultural part of town in the northwest corner of Ellington. Over three-quarters of the McKnight Farm contain soils classified as prime or important farmland soils, the type of soils most suitable for growing crops and the most critical to preserve. "Ensuring that Connecticut's prime and important farmland remains available for agriculture in perpetuity is one of my highest priorities," Department of Agriculture Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky said. "I commend the residents and the administration of the Town of Ellington for their efforts to partner with the state in order to keep the McKnight Farm and other working lands in active production."

The contribution from the Town was \$207,920.86, and a permanent conservation easement is now in place restricting the use of the farm for agriculture only. Protected farms help the Town and State retain its rural character and scenic vistas, protects natural resources, promotes local food security, and sustains employment in the agricultural sector.

The Ellington Planning Department is excited to add the McKnight Farm to the list of farms permanently protected in Ellington and encourages other farms to participate in the program. To learn more, please contact the Ellington Town Planner Lisa M. Houlihan (860-870-3120 / [planner@ellington-ct.gov](mailto:planner@ellington-ct.gov)) or Conservation Commissioner James Gage (860-875-6971).