

Town of Red Hook

Agriculture and Open Space Committee

Minutes of February 27, 2012

Attendance: Chairperson Pete Hubbell, Richard Biezynski, John Hardeman, Marina Michahelles, James Stagias, Ken Migliorelli, Mary Ann Johnson and Secretary Linda Keeling

Absent: Norman Greig and Michael Grady Robertson (7:25 pm),

Guests: Town Board Councilman William O'Neill (liaison), Pam Sheehan, Mike Bennett, Larry Thetford, Jim Sheehan (Hapeman Hill Rd. farm)

Meeting Opened: Chairperson Pete Hubbell opened the meeting at 7:04 pm.

Minutes: The minutes from 12-27-11 (revised) and 1-23-12 were reviewed.

MOTION: *Richard Biezynski motioned to accept the revised 12-27-12 minutes as is and Pete Hubbell seconded, John Hardeman abstained, all others agreed.*

MOTION: *John Hardeman motioned to accept the minutes from 1-23-12 as is and Richard Biezynski seconded, all agreed.*

Old Business:

Greig Landing Strip: Chairperson Pete Hubbell updated the group on Norman Greig's landing strip. Bill O'Neill explained that the Town Board received a letter of resignation from Norman Greig but Supervisor Crane held it as the landing strip issue is nearly resolved. The Building Department determined it is not grandfathered under the new zoning. It must get an approval from the Department of Transportation under section 246 of the general business law. Once the State signs off on it, the two parcels will be reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance and then the Planning Board for a special permit. So Norman Greig is still on this committee.

Pop-Ups and RVs: Pete drafted a letter citing the section and thought he sent it to the secretary but she did not receive an attachment. He will resend it then send it to the Supervisor. John Hardeman questioned if it is motorized or just trailers. Pete explained it was motorized and pop-ups. John explained there are 5th wheels and tow behinds. Pop-ups are generally a smaller vehicle. Campgrounds are allowed in the new zoning code in the ABD. Jim Stagias had initially suggested the group write a letter to the Town board about allowing pop-up tents and Recreational Vehicles. Mary Ann Johnson felt it would help as a town attraction and promotional piece. It might also help in applying for grants.

Promoting Farmers: Linda Keeling asked the group if they received the attachments she forwarded from Mary Kay Vrba. Rich Biezynski couldn't open it so Linda gave him a hard copy. The group felt this was another means of "branding" the Red Hook Farmers. They are looking forward to Rosemarie Zengen's "*Red Hook Farmer's Quarterly*" brochure at the beginning of April. John Hardeman felt there should be a separate group, out of the AOSC, for example, calling it the Red Hook Growers, similar to the Rondout Valley Growers group which is a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit group. Mary Ann would like the group to tap into Dutchess County Tourism so we can develop farm tours and discounts at local hotels and restaurants. Linda Keeling noted that there is a local gentleman who lives in Red Hook who has 8 charter buses. Rich Biezynski noted that there is a difficulty with the amount of produce one can purchase when traveling by bus. Other suggestions were entertained to try to accommodate buying frozen meat. It was felt that it is more of an introduction to the farms so when they come by car they can buy more.

Jim Stagias noted that Greig's Farm in the past attracted thousands of people to his farm through advertising and events. There's "spin-off" from it for restaurants and motel/hotels. Some felt the town doesn't like big events. Linda Keeling explained that unlike planning one month ahead of a major event, like Hardscrabble Day, it takes a full year's effort to plan a big event well. It was felt that the Town would not put any money towards this. Pete Hubbell thought perhaps grants would provide the necessary money. Linda Keeling explained that it would only help to initiate a program. Pete suggested maybe the farmers could contribute money but realized that some could not contribute as much if any.

Outreach: Chairperson Pete Hubbell felt we should make contact with the Chamber of Commerce to help with promoting the farmers and local restaurants. The new president is Ray Amateur of Montgomery Place and Kim Gomez is the Executive Director. Also, Louis Rose of the Columbia Farm Market should be contacted as they are eyeing the Red Hook Parking lot. John feels as a land paying taxpayer, he is losing business to the farm markets and felt it was not fair having farmers from outside the area participate. The Winter Market does not impact the farmers as much. Rich Biezynski said a Hillsdale group was also looking to Red Hook and approached some of the local churches but were discouraged as approvals were set for the Village Parking lot.

Bill O'Neill left at 7:31 pm.

New Business: Larry Thetford of the Red Hook Bicentennial Group gave a presentation.

Larry Thetford explained that there are numerous events to be run by the Ad Hoc Committee. Some of the activities slated for the celebration are a barn dance, West Point Band, etc. The Community Day will be at Montgomery Place, July 14, 10 am, as it can handle the crowds, parking and electrical hook-ups. There will be demonstrations, performances, activities show casing Agriculture from the 19th and 20th centuries as this was the bread basket of the area. There is a renewed interest and effort to educate students about the older ways related to farming. This event will compare Ag from 1812, 1912, and 2012. There will be butter making, canning and picking demonstrations. There will be horse drawn tillage equipment laid out on the lawn. They are looking for docents and parking attendants.

Area farms that might add to the programs: Milan's Great Song Farm, Jan Carson of Milan Hill Rd. Harold Fountain of Clinton has horse teams, Century Old Farm Equipment, Lenny Miller of Rhinebeck, Ray Leachra's summer camp teams, and searching for a DeLaval cream separator. There will be no vendors except the tinsmith, blacksmith, soap makers and musicians can sell their wares. The public will be able to press apples with a cider press to make their own juice. There will be ice boats, period games for youth, and re-enactors, too. The schools are involved with display cabinets and the elementary school is making up songs. The schools are supplying tables and chairs. The Village is supplying the performance stage.

Pete Hubbell said ash was big business in the past. His relative would go around to all the farms and collect the ashes in barrels and take them by boat. Larry added that you extract the lye from the ashes.

John Hardeman suggested having a table set up with a farm list distributed and coordinated with a 10% discount that day or weekend. Larry would need a name of a person to man a table. Jim Stagias felt the Red Hook Farms should be represented. Mary Ann Johnson said the map of the farms is still available.

MOTION: Pete Hubbell motioned to have Linda Keeling put together a list of Red Hook farms, Rich Biezyński seconded, all agreed.

Larry Thetford is willing to have the group set up a table but there is no money available for anything else. If the group wants to distribute a map, plan on about 1000-1500. The needs specs have to be sent to Larry by June 1st so it is ready for the July event. Marina will talk to the farmers about the discounts. Ken Migliorelli will bring a tractor with 5 disc plow and new hay equipment. Larry is looking for ice harvesting and spraying equipment.

Marina left at 7:55 pm.

The next meeting of the Bicentennial Committee is Tuesday, March 20th, 4:30pm at the Elmendorph Inn.

Larry is putting Robert McKeon in charge of the farm animals involving 4-H and scouts. Everyone was very pleased to hear from Larry and thanked him.

Other Business:

The guests spoke to the group. Jim Sheehan explained that due to a divorce 106 acres is to be divided into 2- 50 acre parcels. This was presented to the planning Board under the new zoning laws. They felt the building units were too much of an encroachment on adjacent farmland. There is a 20% grade. Scenic Hudson and Dutchess Land Conservancy are looking at other options.

Pete Hubbell asked if they had a current survey map as this would be in the ABD. There are two parcels of about 96 acres and 6 acres which are not contiguous.

The group reviewed the sketch plan. Under the ABD, 4 lots allowed on each 10 acres, therefore 8 houses are allowed. Other options are: 20 acre house development or sell development rights. They have three children and would like them to have some land.

Mary Ann Johnson felt a solution is forthcoming if Planning Board members and Ag members meet to discuss it. John Hardeman suggested walking the property with a map in hand. The group felt this is a test case. John felt the code should say “where practicable”.

Pete explained that the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has an aerial which shows in color topography and soils. Pete can send them the link if they supply their email. The group advised the Sheehan family to go to the Town Assessor and fill out the form to join the two parcels into one of 106 acres before March 1st.

Pete suggested Linda Keeling coordinate the Planning Board times so Mary Ann Johnson and Pete Hubbell can be kept abreast of the Sheehan proposal difficulties.

MOTION: *Richard Biezynski motioned to adjourn the meeting, Mary Ann Johnson seconded, all agreed.*

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Next meeting: Monday, March 26, 2012, 7:00 pm, town hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda J. Keeling, Secretary

Approved with minor corrections 4/23/12