

Town of Red Hook

Agriculture and Open Space Committee

Minutes of May 27, 2014

Attendance: Co-chairperson Norman Greig, Co-chairperson Pete Hubbell, Richard Biezynski, John Hardeman, Ken Migliorelli, Marina Michahelles and Linda Keeling, secretary.

Absent: Michael Robertson, Mary Ann Johnson and Town Board Councilman William O’Neill (liaison)

Guests: None

Meeting Opened: The Co-Chair *Pete Hubbell* opened the meeting at 7:04 pm.

Minutes: There was a quorum.

Motion: *Norman Greig* motioned to accept the minutes from January 28, 2014, *Richard Biezynski* seconded, all agreed.

Motion: *Pete Hubbell* motioned to accept the minutes from April 10, 2014, *Norman Greig* seconded, all agreed.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Subdivision 143-28, Fences: Pete Hubbell referred to the memo the secretary sent via email to all regarding the simple and direct verbiage desired by the group. At a separate subcommittee meeting Rich, Norm and Ken contributed to the new wording.

This sentence is to be deleted: “Fencing for agriculture shall be authorized to a maximum height of eight feet in any required yard.”

The sentence is amended to read: “Fencing for agriculture shall be exempt from height restrictions, building permits and inspection by the building department in all zones. (excluding spite fencing)”

Definition of spite fencing: “A fence or wall that serves no useful purpose and is constructed as to be an injury to adjoining property and is erected and maintained for the purpose of injuring a neighbor’s property.”

Rich Biezynski said he had a lawyer look at the wording and intent which was felt to be fine.

Marina Michahelles questioned about setbacks. It was decided the county, etc. have their own setbacks. It was felt if you own the land, you could determine what kind of fence is needed. Ken

Migliorelli mentioned that cherries, blueberries and hops can require fencing up to 16 feet in height.

John Hardeman made a suggestion to change the order to read: “*Fencing for agriculture shall be exempt from building permits, inspection and height restrictions by the building department in all zones, excluding spite fencing.*”

Motion: *Richard Biezynski* motioned to modify the wording as suggested by *John Hardeman*, *Marina Michahelles* seconded, all agreed.

2. Committee Report to the Town Board: Co-chairman *Pete Hubbell* volunteered to attend the May 28th Town Board meeting and give an update on the fencing law discussion and decision by the AOSC as well as the Unification Church open space property potential.

3. Joint Meeting with ZRC: It was agreed that we will have a joint meeting with the ZRC on June 12th to assure that the AOSC’s desires are expressed to the ZRC as our representative has not been attending meetings. AOSC would like the ZRC to forward the rewording to the town’s attorney to initiate the appropriate legal terminology to affect the change desired by the farmers.

*** Co-chairman *Pete Hubbell* will write a letter to the ZRC informing them of our attendance at their meeting and the proposed verbiage.

4. Future AOSC Meetings: *Pete Hubbell* felt the fencing issue is resolved and the group will not have to meet until late fall. Emergency meetings will be called if necessary.

5. Open Space Possibility: *John Hardeman* reported he heard that the non-profit Unification Church wants to sell a 2 acre parcel on the Hudson River referred to as Herring Rock. It is the purview of the AOSC to make suggestions to the Town Board to consider purchasing and setting aside additional open space for the public. It seems that *Marirose Blum Bump* may be considering purchasing the property with the intent of building a house on it. One suggestion was that the Bumps could build on the southern acre and donate the northern acre for public access while taking a tax donation. If that is not possible then an outright purchase should be considered by the town.

It was felt that this parcel would allow public access for fishing, boating, kayaking and canoeing as there is presently limited public access to the river now. More research needs to be done on this possibility. The group consulted physical maps and the County’s GIS information on the computer.

*** Co-chairman *Pete Hubbell* will send a formal letter to the Supervisor and the Town Board about this potential open space possibility.

It was mentioned that Robert George of the Trails Committee is spearheading the “Hook Trail” which will they thought will connect the Village of Tivoli, Bard, Linden Avenue and the Village of Red Hook. Members were interested in this open space concept.

Motion: *John Hardeman* motioned that the AOSC research further the Unification Church property on the Hudson River for potential town acquisition for sportsmen and fishermen, *Pete Hubbell* seconded, all agreed.

NEW BUSINESS

1. New Liaison to the Town Board Requested: Some felt that our present liaison, *Bill O’Neill*, has not been representing the AOSC’s concerns adequately. The group felt a new liaison is needed to expedite the group’s wishes and concerns.

*** *Linda Keeling* will draft a letter that the co-chairs can sign with their request.

2. New Liaison to ZRC Needed: It was determined that the present representative, *Mike Robertson*, has not been attending the ZRC meetings and offering the AOSC’s concerns. It was felt a new representative is needed in order to keep both groups informed.

*** *Co-chairman Pete Hubbell* will write a letter to the Supervisor and Town Board regarding the group’s request for a new appointment member from the AOSC to the ZRC.

Motion to Adjourn: *Ken Migliorelli* motioned to adjourn the meeting and *Pete Hubbell* seconded, all agreed.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Next Meeting: The next regular meeting will be **Thursday, June 12th with the ZRC.**

Respectfully submitted,

Linda J. Keeling, AOSC Secretary

APPROVED 6-24-2014

NOTE: Two letters attached:

1. 6-5-14: To Supervisor Crane and Town Board: new liaison
2. 6-5-14: To Chairman Simon and Committee: Joint June 12th meeting and fence wording

Town of Red Hook

Agriculture and Open Space Committee

Co-chairmen Pete Hubbell and Norman Greig

June 5, 2014

Dear Supervisor Sue Crane and Town Board Members:

The Agriculture and Open Space Committee, AOSC, also referred to as the Ag Committee, has the following concerns and requests of the Town Board.

1. The group would like to request a new town board liaison as it was felt our concerns have not been adequately relayed to the Zoning Review Committee regarding the fencing issue which has spanned over several years.
2. We would also request that the Town Board appoint a new liaison from the Ag Committee to the ZRC as attendance and inadequate representation has been an issue for our present designee, Mike Robertson.
3. As our focus also includes open space considerations, we request the Town Board seek negotiations with the Unification Church for the 2 acre parcel along the river referred to as Herring Rock. This would provide town public access and recreation to the river for sportsmen, naturalists and fisherman.

Thank you for your consideration in these varied requested areas,

Pete Hubbell and Norman Greig

Town of Red Hook

Agriculture and Open Space Committee

Co-chairmen Pete Hubbell and Norman Greig

June 5, 2014

Dear ZRC Chairman Susan Simon and Committee Members,

We would like to jointly attend your meeting on June 12th to finalize the verbiage for our request to modify the Zoning Code regarding the fencing issue as it relates to the business interests of farmers in the Agricultural Business District.

We have simplified the wording as follows:

This sentence is to be deleted: “Fencing for agriculture shall be authorized to a maximum height of eight feet in any required yard.”

The sentence is amended to read: “Fencing for agriculture shall be exempt from building permits, inspection and height restrictions by the building department in all zones, excluding spite fencing.”

Definition of spite fencing: “A fence or wall that serves no useful purpose and is constructed as to be an injury to adjoining property and is erected and maintained for the purpose of injuring a neighbor’s property.”

Please share this information with your committee members.

We look forward to answering your questions and expediting and resolving this issue in hopes that your committee will forward these recommendations to the Attorney to the Town, Christine Chale.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter,

Pete Hubbell and Norman Greig