

Town of Red Hook

Agriculture and Open Space Committee

Minutes of February 24, 2015

Attendance: Co-chairperson Pete Hubbell, Co-chairperson Norman Greig (7:28 pm), Richard Biezynski, Ken Migliorelli, Marina Michahelles, Michael Robertson, Town Board Councilman William O'Neill (liaison) and Linda Keeling, secretary.

Absent: John Hardeman and Mary Ann Johnson

Guests: none

Meeting Opened: *Co-chairman Pete Hubbell* opened the meeting at 7:06 pm.

Agenda items: 1. Draft Joint ZRC Oct. 9. 2014 minutes approved 2. Grant Money 3. Old Business: budget, Community Preservation fund (CPF) 3. New Business

Minutes: There was a quorum.

Motion: *Rich Biezynski* motioned to accept the minutes from Oct.9, 2014, *Ken Migliorelli* seconded, all agreed.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Budget:

Motion: *Co-chairman Pete Hubbell* motioned to put in a budget for \$100; *Marina Michahelles* seconded, all agreed.

2. Fencing: There has been no correspondence from the ZRC. It is believed they are including “spite” fences in with the Agricultural fencing wording this committee supplied to them last year.

NEW BUSINESS

1. The New York State Mesonet Weather Observing Network from Dr. Jerald Brotzge, Project Manager (jbrotzge@albany.edu): *Co-chairman Pete Hubbell* distributed a notice in which farmers could participate in a local weather real-time observation project. It would require a 33 ft. tower centered within a 33 ft. x 33 ft. plot of land. Each station must be at least 300 ft. from the nearest obstacle (tall trees, buildings, or potential heat sources like pavement).

“Each of the Mesonet’s 125 weather stations station will measure surface temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and direction, precipitation, solar radiation, atmospheric pressure, and soil moisture and temperatures at three depths. In addition, 17 sites will be outfitted with lidars

(a remote sensing technology that measures distance by illuminating a target with a laser and analyzing the reflected light.) and *microwave profilers, providing wind, temperature, and moisture profiles in the vertical. Another 20 sites will measure snow depth and snow water equivalent for hydrological applications. All of the data will be transmitted in real-time to a central location, where the data will be quality controlled and archived, and then disseminated to a variety of users. Upon completion, real-time data with graphical products/models will be available to the public via a website.*"

If interested contact Dr. Brotzge at his email or visit the website <http://nysmesonet.org> .

Ken Migliorelli thought Dave Fraleigh's farm has a weather monitoring station. Ken indicated that monitoring the weather and insect populations is important for growing crops. *Norman Greig* has an old one from about 15 years ago that runs on electricity but it is obsolete. He might be interested in putting a new one next to it. It is uncertain if payment is allowed. All interested were instructed to call Cornell.

The *co-chairman Pete Hubbell* asked *Bill O'Neill* if he could mention it at the next town board meeting as they are taped by PANDA. He agreed to do it.

2. \$20 Million in Hudson Valley NYS Grant and \$14 million federal grant: *Co-chairman Pete Hubbell* wanted to get the news out about the \$20 million state grant funds availability, an on-going grant, for farmers interested in the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. He also asked *Bill O'Neill* to mention this at the next board meeting. According to *Bill O'Neill* the CPF has about \$330,000 available. *Ken Migliorelli* noted that the 2% tax is only above the medium price.

Rich Biezynski noted that the Community Preservation Fund will need to re-rank top farms in the Ag district this year as the fifth year is coming up. If you are not in an Ag district it is 8 years. The ranking is tentative in that those at a lower number could rise if denied for a year.

Some discussion followed about possible bike trails. *Bill O'Neill* noted that a guy was hired to investigate that issue. *Co-chairman Pete Hubbell* mentioned in Europe they are located three feet in from the road with a grass strip.

Bill O'Neill asked about the Zitz property south of Bucky Coons off of Rt. 9 as there was a recent death. No one had more specific information about that land. Other land possibilities were thrown out as potential applicants.

A press release will also be sent to the local newspapers to attract Red Hook possible applicants for PDRs.

It was noted that with the intense cold spells this winter, many farmers will not be able to pick many crops like peaches, etc.

3. ZRC: *Bill O'Neill* reported that the ZRC met last week and adjourned until their next meeting as it is a work in progress. There are two proposals for spite fencing. Steve Cole, ZEO and members,

were assigned to develop the language for spite fence with reference to the exempt agricultural fence. *Ken Migliorelli*, ZRC representative, attended the meeting. He recommended to that committee that the AOSC review the verbiage before the ZRC passes it.

4. AOSC Member Needed: There is still one opening on the AOSC committee. Members will try to get someone to fill the position.

5. General Discussion: There was some general discussion on the economy in general and farm prices which are flat throughout the middle of NYS based on grain commodities. It is different for the Hudson Valley and the general economy. It was noted that there is an abundance of foreclosures and those coming onto the foreclosure market. Young couples would rather rent than buy a house due to the unstable job market.

It was mentioned that Montgomery Place, comprised of seven separate tax parcels is for sale. Hudson River Heritage has an easement in it. Scenic Hudson and the Open Space Institute (OSI) are interested in buying the property. The AOSC members recalled that in 1998 seven farms were supported by Scenic Hudson for a PDR. Later, there was bonded money which took longer.

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

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.

Next Meeting: The next regular meeting will be **Tuesday, March 24, 2015.**

Respectfully submitted,

Linda J. Keeling, AOSC Secretary
APPROVED 3/24/15