

Town of Red Hook

Agriculture and Open Space Committee

Minutes of October 27, 2015

Attendance: Co-chairperson Pete Hubbell (7:25), Talea Hekman-Taylor, John Hardeman, Hannah Beal, Marina Michahelles, Town Board Councilman William O’Neill (liaison) and Linda Keeling, secretary.

Absent: Co-chairman Norman Greig, Ken Migliorelli, Mike Robertson, and Rich Biezynski

Guests: Larry Thetford and Nancy Guski

Meeting Opened: *Secretary Linda Keeling* opened the meeting at 7:20 pm to accommodate the speaker.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Minutes:** There was a quorum.

MOTION: Talea Hekman-Taylor motioned to accept the minutes from September 22nd, Hannah Beal seconded, all agreed.

2. **Tree Commission Chairman Info Gathering on Glyphosate:** *Nancy Guski* spoke on her topic of concern, Glyphosate (Round-up). Tree Commission Chairman Guski explained that an incident of over-spray possibly occurred with a neighbor who contacted her. She and Brenda Cagle did a site inspection of Alice Meyer’s property and agreed with Alice about the tree’s leaves shriveling. Nancy Guski handed out a copy of the Poughkeepsie Journal’s Earth Talk, 10-25-15 article entitled: “Controversy Still Surrounds Roundup Use” <http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/life/2015/10/22/environment-earth-talk-roundup-use/74385738/>

Region 3 Forester, George Profus, was also contacted. Alice’s concern is that it weakened her tree and she has health issues. The Tree Commission is seeking information on the application process for Glyphosate. Nancy Guski contacted our Dutchess County Legislators, Carey Arboretum, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Red Hook’s Conservation Advisory Council and Supervisor Sue Crane.

Larry Thetford addressed the issue of the spray as it applies to the needs of the farmer to control weeds in the growing fields. It is illegal for a certified sprayer to use the product inconsistent with the label. There must be calm weather conditions. Translocation is defined as the product migration to any green leaf roots, grass and any green growing material. It’s a short life material because it is translocated to the green material. The label information can be found on line.

John Hardeman wanted to know the location. *Chairman Guski* indicated Alice Meyer’s property is on the north side of Rokeby Farm near the Kalina’s cornfield.

Talea Hekman-Taylor explained that Round-up is used in fruit production under trees. The applicator brushes touch the ground. *John Hardeman* added it is a contact herbicide.

Marina Michahelles wondered if the heat from the road pavement might be involved with the tree's decline or a lack of water from underground.

John Hardeman felt it is not drift as it would have affected the grass. NYS Laws cover the issue and should not be a local issue. There is always a controversy over Monsanto's original products.

Pete Hubbell added that Monsanto is responsible for the Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) products like corn which are Roundup resistant.

Nancy Guski said she has not heard from any other neighbors in that area recently.

John Hardeman said farmers would not be happy if they had to notify all adjoining neighbors before spraying. *Larry Thetford* stressed that spray timing is critical for apple scab and this is done during calm weather. So notifying property owners could be cumbersome especially if weather conditions change.

Nancy Guski said that a NYSDEC arborist has looked at Alice's trees but the results are not in yet.

Larry Thetford added that an additive is added to make the droplets heavier so it won't drift. It takes about 5 years of course work to become a licensed applicator as approved course work by NYSDEC.

Nancy Guski thanked everyone for their time and input as the information from the farmer's point of view is very helpful in her ability to become informed and share this knowledge.

3. PDF Application Update: No update thus far, there has to be a cooperating partner which is still being researched. There is about \$300,000 in the CPF.

4. Fence Resolution: Bill O'Neill said it is still under consideration by the attorney to the town, Christine Chale, as the important farming aspect of "no permit fees" was missing from her submitted legislation narrative to the town board. A revised legislation is on the town board's calendar for November. The farmers were upset with the amount of years it has taken to resolve this issue.

5. Budget: *Pete Hubbell* said he handed in the group's request for \$200. Bill O'Neill said it was approved. Unused money from the 2015 budget will be added to the 2016 request.

6. Farm List: Secretary *Linda Keeling* had sent out a revised list to the group via email. There are still questions on how to use the list as a promotional piece. Discussion focused on possibly linking it to the town's website as well as a paper copy. Some would like to see PYO and SCA separated out.

Marina Michahelles thought listing all the farms gives leverage on any local legislation that might affect farmers or if writing a grant. She gave practical suggestions on how to develop a stand-alone website for the list including incorporating farm product locations with links to restaurants using those local products. She would be willing to work with the town's webmaster on developing the pages.

Linda Keeling reminded the group of an email from *Mary Ann Johnson* whose group, Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corp. (www.hvadc.org) could assist with grants and promoting farming. There are grants available in the 5-8K for economic development but the turn-around is quick, 30-60 days. Contact Mary Jane Bertram, Regional Director 845-567-1213 (office) or 845-901-7159 (cell) at the Workforce Development Institute at www.wdiny.org Mary Ann said, "Northern Dutchess Alliance is working on updating the DC Tourism old historic driving tours with farms, local food and craft beverage locations. The Farm Tour would be nice to add and/or coordinate with the Chamber and other businesses. If the committee is interested, let her know and she can get the information. HVADC is working with DC Tourism."

Larry Thetford was impressed with the numbers of farmers listed. He would like the Tripp Farm of old changed to the Thetford Farm.

7. Conference: *Co-chair Pete Hubbell* said the American Farm Land Trust (AFLT) Conference is in Albany on Wed. Nov. 4th. There about 6 different programs going on. It is \$95 each. *Talea and Hannah* volunteered to attend. They should submit their receipts including mileage. *Co-chair Pete Hubbell* felt that the expense could be covered with a budget amendment. *Bill O'Neill* felt there wouldn't be a problem with the expense for the Conference as valuable information can be shared.

NEW BUSINESS

1. PDR: *John Hardeman* said adding wetlands into the purchase price of property should be weighted. The Community Protection Fund (CPF), under Chairman Susan Ezrati, will be looked at this year as it has been 5 years. Important wetlands could potentially be purchased under the CPF. *Linda Keeling* noted that wetlands are very important for natural flood control. Throughout the USA, 50% has been lost since the beginning of time.

2. Historic Preservation Maps: *Bill O'Neill* indicated there is another informational meeting Thursday. The first meeting was well attended (27 people) and focused on preservation and demolition protections of the 300 properties identified in former town surveys (1987, 2000, 2006) located in the National Historic District along west of Rt. 9G and four other designated properties. The 1993 Town Code did not incorporate the historic protections or any mapping according to GreenPlan. The hamlets will be included in the future. Historic Red Hook will do an update of the houses, barns and other features. It was noted that in other places like Connecticut even the stone walls are protected and no stone could be removed.

3. NYS Early Weather Notification System: *Steve Perez* has located a site. *John Hardeman* said some 5 ft. high sensors are on the high school with the main facility on his farm. It is over the rise so it is not visible from the road. *Bill O'Neill* noted there are 125 locations throughout NYS with 80 fulfilled so far. The town will probably sign off on the location of the facility. *Peter Hubbell* mentioned to *John Hardeman* that he should ask for an assessment reduction from the new assessor *Jennifer Warburton*.

Motion to Adjourn:

MOTION: *Marina Michahelles* motioned to adjourn the meeting, *Talea Hekman-Taylor* seconded, all agreed.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:22 pm

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

Respectfully submitted,

Linda J. Keeling, AOSC Secretary

APPROVED Nov. 24, 2015