

## **APPROVED**

### **Community Preservation Fund Advisory Board Meeting Minutes December 3, 2009**

Members present: Chair Susan Ezrati, Rich Biezynski, Pete Hubbell, Brent Kovalchik, Robin Logan  
Absent: Miriam Latzer, Phil Seymour  
Also Present: Harry Colgan, TB Liaison

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 p.m. A quorum was determined to be present for the conduct of business. The Board reviewed the November 5, 2009 minutes. Susan noted that the name of Phil Seymour had not been included in the list of those who were present. As there were no further changes, Brent moved to accept the Minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Robin and all were in favor.

Susan distributed copies of a spreadsheet which she developed. She took the first fifty properties on the parcel listing and scored them according to each of the criteria in categories A through D, including whether or not the property had been given an agricultural exemption. For each of the criteria, she assigned one point for each yes and a zero for each no. After assigning the scores, she did a sort which resulted in a listing of the scores in descending order within each category (i.e. highest to lowest). She presented both versions of the data. Robin said that when the Board is asked to evaluate individual properties, this spreadsheet will be a useful tool.

Susan said that she and Brent need to develop data for the village which can be included in this or an additional spreadsheet. Perhaps, she said, we need to be thinking about two different sets of data as ag properties and cultural properties do not have a lot to do with each other.

Pete suggested that the data could be weighted, with the ag criteria carrying the highest weight. Susan thought that Categories A and B might be considered together as they are more closely linked. The high scores on Category A are correlated with high scores on Category B because it is the agricultural properties which tend to have forested land, etc. She suggested that C and D Categories might be put into a separate pot. While some of the scenic properties have high scores on A and B, there are only one or two properties in the group which has been reviewed which have any historical or cultural aspects.

Brent said that categories for the villages would have to be distinct from those for the town. Rich suggested that the B's and C's for the town might be the A's and B's for the villages. Susan and Brent agreed to meet and work on developing criteria for the villages. Brent questioned whether it might be possible to get an intern to help with this work. He noted that although Red Hook is a historic area, very few properties are on the Historic Register. He said that Red Hook sits on an aquifer and that there are wetlands, some of which are protected by zoning. He asked whether the Egbert Benson Historical Society might have any information on Red Hook.

Susan offered to complete her spreadsheet by scoring the remaining 125 parcels on the list. The Board welcomed her offer. Pete said that the Board could then think about a weighting system. He felt it would be helpful to do all four categories. Susan said that the spreadsheet could become a sort of master list. Robin said that she liked the idea of a master list very much. If a property did come up, the Board could go back to the master list and determine how it stands relative to the

other properties. She said that this is what the Vermont Land Trust does; it sets up an objective view.

Susan felt that the master list would give the Board flexibility in evaluating properties. For example if a farm which is on prime soil is not currently an operating farm but becomes an operating farm, the score for the property on the master list could be increased to reflect this change. Pete said that perhaps the Board could develop similar but separate criteria for the villages. Brent suggested that a percentage of the money could be allocated for the town and a percentage for the villages so that money would always be available for both. Sue said that Chris Chale had said that it could be set up so that there is a balance between the two objectives. Thus if there were no need in one pool or the other, the criteria would dictate that the money would devolve to the pool which is in need. Pete noted that in that case each village would have a percentage of the money, which is equitable because they are paying in. Susan said that she would complete the master list and send it to the members in an e-mail. She asked everyone to spot check the data when they receive it.

Susan said that she had asked Ted Fink if he could give her a list of all the properties on which the development rights have been sold. Those properties could be eliminated from the list. Pete suggested that the properties be left on the list but with an asterisk to indicate that the rights have been sold. He said that later the Board might want to set up some restrictions, e.g. that the property can only be sold to a qualified farmer. In response to questioning, he said that there are precedents for such a stipulation. There was a discussion about programs which are supported by government funds as opposed to those which operate on private funds. Susan summarized the discussion by saying that the concern seems to be that without a stipulation that the property be sold to a qualified farmer, the owner could sell the property to a "gentleman farmer" who has no desire to develop it as a farm and who might use it as a horse farm or to raise llamas. Susan said that since there are dual objectives, the Board needs to have a sense of what the town wants. One objective is to maintain and to fund active farms and the other objective is open space.

Susan said that the Board needs to determine how to weight the criteria. Pete said that if the Board developed the weighting system, he could apply that weighting system to the completed spreadsheet. For example, category A could be 50%, B could be 30% and C and D could each be 10%. In response to the suggestion that a total score be calculated, he said that this would give the less important categories equal weight. Also, B has six criteria while A has only four. Therefore, although A is more important, B would count more. If you use a total score, you will have more B's with higher scores than you should. Susan concluded the discussion by saying that she would complete the spreadsheet and send it to everyone. Pete can then work on weighting the categories, applying the weights to the data and developing a weighted master list. Robin stressed that the raw data is very objective and should be maintained separately. Pete said that it could be maintained as a working spreadsheet.

Susan said that since agriculture is the most important factor, per the Open Space Plan, there can be a separate ranking for the cultural and historic properties. Rich said that there could be a separate sheet with completely different criteria. For example, the gateway would be in the town but not in the villages. Susan said that the "green belt" surrounding the villages is essentially a gateway. Brent said that there would be some overlapping. It was agreed that separate criteria should be developed for the villages and Susan and Brent will set up a meeting to work on developing those criteria.

Susan said that Ted Fink has been asked to help the Town of Cold Springs with their waterfront development and they will be meeting every first and third Thursday evening. She asked the Board

if their meeting time could be changed so that Ted could continue to attend Board meetings. After discussion, it was determined that no other date would be convenient for the members.

A motion to adjourn was made by Robin and seconded by Brent. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 P.M. The next meeting will be held on January 7, 2009 at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Franklin