

Public Hearing
Proposed Enactment of a Six Month Moratorium

A Public Hearing on the proposed enactment of a six month moratorium on subdivision of certain large parcels of land within a proposed agricultural reserve was held on Monday, May 8, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. at Red Hook High School Gymnasium, 103 West Market Street with the following in attendance:

Present: Supervisor Marirose Blum Bump
 Councilman James Ross
 Councilwoman Sue Crane
 Councilwoman Jean Bordewich
 Councilman Harold Ramsey
 Town Clerk Susan McCann

Also present: Attorney Joel Sachs and Deputy Supervisor William O'Neill

Before the meeting began Paul Fredrick's handed the keys to St. Margaret's to Supervisor Blum Bump.

The Public Hearing was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Blum Bump introduces Joel Sachs, Attorney for the Town.

Supervisor Blum Bump read ground rules...there is a sign up sheet for anyone who wants to talk to the Town Board, three minute rule, state your name and where you live. Rules will be strictly enforced.

Supervisor read public hearing notice and notice of change of location.

Supervisor Blum Bump read the proposed draft law.

On a motion of Supervisor Blum Bump, seconded by Councilwoman Bordewich the Public Hearing was opened.

Adopted Ayes 5 Blum Bump, Ross, Crane, Bordewich, Ramsey
 Nays 0

Resident reads and questions notice of the meeting. Resident states that you have not followed the law by informing the residents of a change in location. Supervisor Blum Bump said our Attorney is here and we'll take it up with him. Residents question the validity of changing the place of the meeting. This is an illegal meeting. Attorney Joel Sachs instructs the Supervisor to take the comments under advisement. Supervisor Blum Bump advises residents to sit down.

Supervisor says we will take a five minute adjournment at 7:55 p.m.

Meeting reconvenes at 8:02 p.m. The Supervisor announced the public hearing will be rescheduled. She apologized for moving the meeting without enough notice. We will hold an informational meeting.

Supervisor Blum Bump read the purpose and goal of the six month moratorium.

Privilege of the floor

Mary Ann Johnson – member of Ag and Open Space and CAC. Supports the moratorium and would like us to take a look at other tools that could be used. Thanked the Town Board.

Micki Strawinski believes we should take six months moratorium to take a look at issues that the Task Force is working on.

Nancy Russo...we pay \$23,000 in taxes and says the Town has the gall to tell her that she can't develop her land if she chooses to do so. Gradual, small development could help pay the taxes. Feels this is targeted discrimination of a few big parcels.

Patrick Murphy...I'm against the moratorium, we were notified too late. We should all work together. This is all moving way too fast. He moved here for the school district. We have other serious problems with our infrastructure. We need to focus on other issues not just open space.

Lee Ann Hansen is opposed to the enactment of a moratorium and any other further restrictive zoning. We are trying to subdivide for our own children. If it his law is enactment, it would not allow this.

Tom Espie...this will be a large financial loss for him as well as a financial hardship for his family.

Trilby Sieverding says it's not about protecting farms, but taking property rights from the owners which is unconstitutional. We already have protection. Local Law #3 protects Towns agriculture industry at no cost to the property owners. As far as the PDR 1700 acres already purchased, conservation easement is (a taxpayer burden). The map is not correct and properties have been left out.

Paul Vosburgh (Kesicke Farm) is opposed to the proposed moratorium and the proposed enactment of an agricultural reserve district. Local Law #3 does distinguish between prime agriculture soils, soils of state wide significance and active farms. Feels the Town has not studied this proposal enough. Town wants to limit homeowners, and the moratorium is improper. Paul hand delivered a letter to be read and entered into the Town's record. -Copy attached.

Kathy Schmidt has 45 acres and is not interested in developing her land. She just wants fairness for others. Laws are already in Town to be used to answer these problems or questions. Get information out to the public so we know what's going on.

Kenneth McCulloch, Attorney reads a short memo. TDR program is a problem that will expose the Town to lawsuits. If you are taking away development rights you have to give them something of equal value. Has been authorized to file a lawsuit and has already done so in Poughkeepsie, Pleasant Valley, and Milan. I am presenting this information because this is a big item. Asks if anyone really talked to the farmers, not the main industry of Red Hook and most likely won't be.

Michael Rohatyn comments that farming is a viable industry although I am not an expert I have done some research on it. The idea that people in this community are hanging onto the quaint and elitist lifestyle that they want to preserve is very inaccurate and misguided. A 6 month moratorium is a temporary idea and a very modest way of buying time.

Leo Sieverding shows a map of true agriculture properties affected by this moratorium the 10 plus acre properties. No one knows how the other map was generated. This map shows 208 parcels that are represented out of a total of 3030 parcels in the Town of Red Hook. That's about 6.8% of the population which is not the majority of the land owners. The Town has an obligation to demonstrate that a moratorium affects the majority of the land owners. No one really understands what's going on. I suggested parcel owners be notified. A moratorium is not a dialog.

Ann Marie Vosburgh believes that most people say they are in favor of open space and preserving agriculture but every choice has its cost or consequences. It is her right to have the implications clearly stated so that she can make an informed decision before we blindly take action on a moratorium.

John Howard said that he doesn't think it's a temporary thing and we are premature in doing this. I am adamantly opposed to the moratorium. Not now, not yet.

Lorrie Klosterman... the information is a little vague, appreciates open space, and has a strong concern about development that is taking place and I'm concerned about the types of homes going up. In favor of a moratorium originally, however after speaking with others that is not the issue. Finding that the overall issue is making decisions about how much development versus farmland. We need to share information with forward thinking. Encourages dialog without a harsh, strong agenda.

Brenda Cagle served on the Inter – Municipal Task Force, CAC Chair, supports the moratorium and respects more dialogue. Looking for more planning tools to be put into effect.

Ruth Oja endorses the idea of a moratorium, feels it's good for all residents. We have a good Comprehensive Plan, but the zoning law is not set up to implement the goals of the master plan. A moratorium is only a delay and 6 months is a very short time, too short a time. The Town needs to look at the master plan.

Marcy Appell said the point of this moratorium is to write zoning code and asks who is going to write the new code? Does the existing Land Use Committee or is a new committee set up to do this? Does the committee have a consultant? Six months is a very short time and can't see doing what you have to do in that short amount of time. Come out publicly so that people know what your plan is. This is very confusing.

Rosemarie Zengen..."SAVE OUR TOWN" doesn't want to validate this meeting. This is an illegal meeting. Town Clerk McCann did not get the notice of change of address from the Supervisor until late Thursday. This is an illegal informational meeting.

Vicky Perry commends the Town Board for all their work. I endorse the 6 month moratorium. Dialogue needs to take place. We need to move ahead with positive land use planning. Doesn't think anyone will be hurt by this moratorium and it can enhance the community.

Doreen Ruff, a member of the Land Use Committee, member of building industry, and yes, we want open space. We are reaching for the same goal, but not at the expense of land owners. Questions why we need a moratorium to reach our goals.

Laurie Husted feels the moratorium is the breath we can take and that it is a good idea.

Ned Sullivan a resident and President of Scenic Hudson, and is not taking a position on the proposed moratorium or on the proposed agricultural preserve issue. I want to reiterate the importance of the work to protect our open space. Farming is key to Red Hook's economy. Leadership has been provided on so many fronts, the bond issue is a model, and the Ag & Open Space Committee is a vital resource of decision making and land use issues, your support for the Community Preservation Act. All these provide a great set of tools to protect our vital resources. The key is that agriculture is tax positive.

Bob Brower feels that most parcels are isolated or non-contiguous. If we continue on this path we are doing more harm than good.

Amy Dubin feels we are running in circles, chasing our tails. It is important to take a breather. We need to evaluate, step back and listen to what people are really saying. It's too expensive to live here. What is the cost of development here? I support the moratorium because it is getting more expensive to live here.

Christine Kane, Chair of the Planning Board. At an informational meeting on March 6 the Planning Board supported the moratorium in order to take steps. We still see proposals on farmland. This is a proactive step. If the moratorium is adopted, have a clear accepted date so that we can accommodate any applications that come in.

James Romm supports the proposal. This is designed to prevent a reckless action. The pace of development has been quickening in the last years. The purpose of the moratorium is to slow things down.

Nathan Kalina asked a neighbor to read his speech. He opposes moratorium. His farm has been in continuous operation for the fifty years he's been here. The zoning changes are unreasonably restrictive. The rights of existing farmers such as himself are unfairly affected if this proposal were adopted. The last zoning process created well balanced zoning laws. There is no reason to change the laws yet again.

Charles Laing, a Planning Board member and who also serves on the Inter-municipal Task Force stated that the Planning Board favored the moratorium. As a taxpayer and resident he too agrees with it. The current zoning is not working, not doing what our Comprehensive Plan says we should be doing.

Frank Stoppenbach refers to the Bond referendum. Zoning is the real solution. Two concerns should be addressed in NY State #1 is taxes, #2 is zoning. Let's work together and do it in a fair way.

Larry Thetford, a member of the Agriculture Committee says that agriculture may not be the biggest industry certainly lagging behind the building industry. May not be as profitable, but we are trying to save a natural resource. We are trying to buy time to preserve a natural resource before we lose it. We do nothing behind closed doors, have an open committee. We're trying to do what's best for Red Hook.

Nick Annas listened to all sides and haven't heard about how tax payers are subsidizing those who do want to subdivide. We need a moratorium to look at all aspects and who the parties are that will benefit and who will be injured by this.

Elizabeth Wilkens supports the moratorium. We need to sit back and take the time to see what we can do to help everyone.

Ruth Oxenburg lives in Livingston and pays Red Hook School taxes. She supports the moratorium. Every couple of months she sees new houses. Everything she does is in Red Hook. Building increases school taxes. The school taxes are just going up and up and up. There is no mention of the growth. The schools are starting to be at near capacity. Six months is nothing and feels we should have more public meetings.

Susan Simon... Thanks the Board for the meeting. Smart growth is the key. In favor of the moratorium, but doesn't think six months is long enough. One year would be more sensible. We need to move forward. Everybody loves this Town. Don't let it turn into another Levittown.

Frank Vosburgh, speaking as a farmer, does not believe that creating 40 acre zoning is going to help preserve our farms. To save farm land, start with the farmer.

Al Trezza is not sure if he's opposed or in favor of a moratorium. There has not been a lot of growth in Red Hook. In the last 5 years we've issued 186 permits, which are about 30 houses per year, equaling about 1 % growth. I am very much in favor of preserving open space. His family has been preserving open space since 1946. He has owned his farm since 1969. He put his time, energy and money into preserving open space as has his sister and brother-in-law. TDR is a very useful planning tool. The Town Board should very carefully consider all this. We need more discussion before you pass a moratorium.

Noreen VanValkenburg attended the last meeting and is very concerned about the research. 7% is only being discussed. You really should look at the whole town not just a few. Are you prepared to pay a very large bulk of bonding to finance these TDR's in the future, which is going to mean an increase in taxes which will increase the burden on the farmer. How will you ease the tax burden? As far as information about meetings...this was not advertised. Information needs to be available and accurate. There does need to be dialog. She doesn't feel these people have any statistical background, and should have statistical information.

Richard Franklin...gasoline is up, fuel oil is up, food is up, electric is up we have a 25 – 30% inflation rate. The farmers have a very large inflation rate. The trend is

outsourcing. Look at every aspect. Seniors are getting clobbered. Social Security went up only to be taken by Medicare. We need to manage our growth which has not been explosive. Don't restrict their rights to their property.

Kathryn Stewart agrees that we do need to talk to farmers. Her concern is that we have a complicated financial situation here. The financial component should be looked at. Prices are higher because there is less land. People with financial background should sit down with the farmers with other people in our community and put our heads together.

Kristopher Munn is in favor of the moratorium. The more houses, the higher the school taxes. We need to get a handle on the random growth. Does not want "McMansions". Is for a six month moratorium.

James Warhola is for the moratorium. Six months is nothing, it should be for a year. We're just asking for a little breather. Put in some creative thought to accommodate farmers, realtors. Let's work together.

Sarah Sweeney said the two main issues that keep coming up are cost and subdivisions. She endorses a moratorium. Would love to have creative workshops and discuss the burden. We need a moratorium for smart growth.

Harry Colgan was on the Land Use Task Force and we had 3 public hearings and the concern was preserving open space and the rural character of the town. I never heard the level of concern about the right to subdivide. We heard quite the contrary. The Inter-Municipal Task Force has frequent meetings on the subject. I feel the hot breath of development on the back of my neck. I would like a moratorium.

Kim Barke...thanks the Board for this dialogue. Strongly supports this moratorium to get in line with our Comprehensive Plan. We could have our own sustainable way of life here. More restrictive building can make property worth more.

Karen Streifeneder is not opposed but why this didn't happen earlier than now. Glad this is an informational meeting. Why just these 208 parcels, why not more? Commented on posting this meetings change of location.

Sarah Taylor owns 33 acres. Respects Al Trezza as a very informed person. She lost her husband last year and has to reassess how she is going to be living. Feels privileged to live in this community. Has 4 children and pays \$15,000 in taxes. She is a radical environmentalist. Has had an offer for her property which would allow her to pay off her mortgage. She wants agriculture to be protected. She opposes the moratorium because she feels she should have the right to sell a part of her land so that she can stay here.

Tom Mansfield...potentially more development will be in his area. I see some problems with a moratorium. There should be allowance to have small divisions. There are people out there looking for places like Red Hook to develop. They are out there right now. Red Hook is rare – close to the city, but not yet chopped up.

Letters and e-mails received from:

Sam and Arleen Harkins- opposed to moratorium

Dr. Karen Garelick – opposed

Mark S. Meritt- supports moratorium

Sharon Mauer- supports moratorium

Heather Finck- supports moratorium

Eve Felder- supports moratorium

Irene DeMier – supports moratorium

Katherine Gould-Martin – support moratorium

Jeff Crane – supports moratorium

Hazel Westney – support moratorium

Supervisor Blum thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

On a motion of Supervisor Blum Bump, seconded by Councilman Crane move to close the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Adopted	Ayes 5	Blum Bump, Ross, Crane, Bordewich, Ramsey
	Nays 0	

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McCann, Town Clerk