

Town of Red Hook

Agriculture and Open Space Committee

Minutes of March 29, 2016

APPROVED June 28, 2016

Attendance: Co-chairman Pete Hubbell, Co-chairman Norman Greig, Ken Migliorelli (ZRC & EDC), Mike Robertson (Sawkill Coalition), Marina Michahelles (Website), Rich Biezynski, John Hardeman, Hannah Beal and Linda Keeling, secretary and Town Board Councilman William O'Neill (liaison)

Absent: Talea Hekman-Taylor

Guests: Dick Wambach (speaker) and Chris Klose

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

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Minutes:** There was a quorum (8 of 9).

MOTION: *Norman Greig* motioned to accept the February 23, 2016, *Marina Michahelles* seconded, all agreed.

2. **Speaker, Richard (Dick) Wambach, 7:10 – 7:45 pm:** Dick Wambach was invited to speak about creating a website presence off the EDC “Red Hook Hudson Valley” website. Introductions were made.

As he is paid by the town for his website work, it would not cost AOSC from their budget. The website has several parts to it: a calendar and Facebook page for “Shop Local”, community network through moms and dads about what is happening in Red Hook by cross-sharing. Farming activities would be a natural for promoting picking and other activities at the farms. The email newsletter goes out to homes and business, presently there are 351 names. Dick explained the feedback, reach out and needs / solutions. This is similar to the bigger scale County EDC so we get on the map and have needs assessments. The idea is to keep businesses informed and attract new businesses.

The Committee is made up of 9 members with *Ken Migliorelli* as a member. They meet twice per month, the second and fourth Wednesday mornings in the Village Hall. The Committee is open to the public and they can bring issues before the group to promote outreach.

Recently they have been concentrating on the massive fire at the Ross Family complex. The EDC focused on helping the businesses relocate and help for their employees. The facility needs to be demolished. It involves 11 separate insurance companies and four inspections.

Dick referenced the Farm List *Linda Keeling* sent him. He has some suggestions on how it can be integrated into the EDC website. He suggested AOSC have a liaison to post to the Community Calendar.

A pass word and user name can be set up. Dick monitors the listings. He thought the farms should have their websites and email addresses listed so the links can be set up. A Farm List can be done in a pdf file and searched through Google for data. There are links in “About Red Hook” by alphabetical listing as well as links to Dutchess County Tourism and links to the major Community events: Appleblossom, Hardscrabble Day, etc. Dick has been working on this project for the town pro bono and he will continue to do so. *Marina Michahelles* offered to collect the website and email addresses and be the liaison.

Pete Hubbell asked Dick if feedback could be gotten on a particular idea, for example, access to raw milk. Dick suggested using Facebook where surveys can be done. This is an area whereby Dick will be doing additional research. The problem is limited likes on the page so it would need to grow in order to get better participation for capturing opinions. Dick felt it is relatively easy to set up and the data can be very useful. Marina noted that for \$20 Facebook will post a survey. Dick noted that a survey could be posted on the EDC website and the data results shared. Dick felt it would be better to post on Facebook because emails are automatically received rather than going to the EDC website. Pete Hubbell noted that AOSC’s budget was doubled to \$200 this year but we are still limited in what we can do. EDC spent its budget on hosting and website creation which is modest and simple. The Calendar has been very successful for attracting general audiences. Taste Budd has been very effective in posting there and through Facebook. Marina asked if it is for non-profit and for profit and Dick responded that it is for all. He encourages farmers to “like” the Red Hook Hudson Valley website so the information can be shared through Facebook and through Constant Contact for which he is a business partner. Even the phone numbers can be hyperlinked if a farmer doesn’t have a website or Facebook presence.

Dick noted that the EDC statistics were 10% from general search, 19% from town website and 10% from the Village and 26% from Facebook for 2015. For 2016 January to March: 3153 hits with varying percentages.

Everyone appreciated Dick’s presentation and willingness to help our group post to the town’s webpage and EDC’s connection.

2. Fences: *Co-chairman Pete Hubbell* said Supervisor Robert McKeon called asking if the AOSC would pass the wording in the new law. “C”: A permit would not be required if the fencing doesn’t exceed 8 feet in height. For the corner of road, the fence needs to be back from the road for site distances. It was sent to the attorney to the town, Christine Chale, and she sent her recommendations to the town board. It will go back to the AOSC then to the ZRC then back to the town board for approval.

For discussion AOSC member *Ken Migliorelli* doesn’t like the 8 foot height limit. *Norman Greig* agreed that deer will jump an eight foot fence. John Hardeman said there was no height restriction for the wording AOSC submitted. He felt that was approved by the ZRC for no height restriction. He felt we talked about not having to be in the certified Agricultural District as is the case for some farms. *Rich Biezynski* said a camp fence would be illegal at 10 feet for which deer still get in. They could put another 2 feet of barbed wire on top of that.

There was discussion on the definition of spite fence again. Rich took about a dozen pictures of spite fences in Red Hook but he didn't have them to show. *John Hardeman* noted that a stockade fence for privacy doesn't allow for light and air to pass. Rich noted that it is all in the interpretation of a privacy fence versus a spite fence. *Pete Hubbell* claimed what is the objective of a farm fence. *Mike Robertson* asked what kind of fence must be built to prevent the passage of air to my neighbor's property. John said the interpretation is dependent on the intended use of the fence as in the case of a horse fence whereby the boards would be on the inside of the fence. *Norman Greig* felt that it should not be whether you are in a certified Agricultural Business but whether fields receiving farm reductions are part of the farming operation. Agricultural fencing is different than housing fencing separating private properties. Animal restraining fences require the finished facing be done on the inside so the "finished facing" should be exempted for agricultural fences. *John Hardeman* suggested changing the wording to reflect subsection 301 of the Ag and Farm Markets Law.

The height restriction is still an issue as it was abolished at the last meeting. The ZRC and the AOSC previously approved the no height restriction statement.

John Hardeman suggested eliminating all stockade fences as they are solid fencing in his interpretation as seen as a wall.

3. **Hapeman Hill PDR**: No update

4. **CPF**: About \$600,000 available to date. No further update.

5. **Comments on PJ 3-14-16 Article: "Farmers worry about proposal to hike minimum wage."** *Ken Migliorelli* was featured. No further discussion.

6. **Sawkill Coalition Status**: No update

7. **ZRC liaison status**: *Ken Migliorelli*, no status update.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Linda Stoddard Committee email updates**: *Bill O'Neill* indicated the town secretary wanted the recent email address for all members.

2. **Farm List**: *Linda Keeling* asked if Battenfield should be included. They all agreed to eliminate that listing as it is in Milan. *Marina Michahelles* will go through the list to check with the farmers to see if they want to be on the list.

3. **Appleblossom Day Participation May 10th**: There was little interest in participating. *John Hardeman* said a polar vortex will come soon. The blossoms may be negatively affected by the Feb. 14th freeze event. *Ken Migliorelli* said due to the cold weather, he will not prune his trees in order to get any viable fruiting blossoms. It will be a light fruit crop this year.

Motion to Adjourn:

MOTION: *Norman Greig* motioned to adjourn the meeting, *John Hardeman* seconded, all agreed.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm. No meeting for April.

Next Meeting: The next regular meeting will be **Tuesday, May 24, 2016.**

Respectfully submitted,

Linda J. Keeling, AOSC Secretary