

**DRAFT**

Town of Red Hook

**Agriculture and Open Space Committee**

**Minutes of October 25, 2016**

**Attendance:** Co-chairman Pete Hubbell, Co-chairman Norman Greig, Ken Migliorelli (ZRC & EDC), John Hardeman, Marina Michahelles (Website), Hannah Beal, and Linda Keeling, secretary

**Absent:** Mike Robertson (Sawkill Coalition), Rich Biezynski, Talea Hekman-Taylor and Town Board Councilman William O'Neill (liaison)

**Guests:** None

**Meeting Opened:** Co-chairman Norman Greig opened the meeting at 7:17 pm and everyone had received an emailed tentative agenda.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. **Minutes:** There was a quorum (6 of 9). There were no meetings for August and September.

Note: As there was not a quorum (1 of 9), the July 26, 2016 draft was not voted on.

**MOTION:** *Marina Michahelles* motioned to accept the June 28, 2016, *Hannah Beal* seconded, all agreed.

2. **Website:** *Marina Michahelles* reported no further progress has been made with Dick Wambach regarding the website. She still needs to continue updating the farm list. The idea is to link the farms' websites. The calendar of events would link to Dick's Facebook page. This is an opportunity to advertise special products and events. *Linda Keeling* suggested Marina contact Dick as he is very busy.

3. **Land Leasing:** *Co-chairman Pete Hubbell* noted there is a workshop at Cary Institute in Millbrook on Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> regarding setting lease terms for farmer's vacant land. Rich Biezynski will attend.

4. **Workshop:** Hudson Valley Ag Issues, Wallace Center Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>. *Pete Hubbell* reported no one attended.

5. **Raw Milk:** *Pete Hubbell* canvassed the group about the potential of starting a raw milk operation. There are some locations in Millbrook, Gardner and Hawthorne Valley. Market research suggested that the milk must be sold at the farm from where it is produced. The dairy business is down and there is no outlet for selling excess milk. No decision was made on the suggestion.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Thank You to Linda Keeling as Secretary:** *Norman Greig*, on behalf of the AOSC, wanted to thank Linda Keeling for her many years of professionalism, completeness and enthusiasm for doing the minutes before the year ends with her resignation on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>. Linda thanked them and noted it has been a challenge at times as she does the Tree Commission the week before and sometimes minutes for other groups as a volunteer. Norman and Pete should contact the town clerk to see who will be her replacement.

**2. Intermunicipal Task Force (ITF):** *Norman Greig* led a long discussion on the ITF's meeting to limit formula businesses and how a small committee is rewriting the laws so as to limit the types of businesses in the Agricultural Business District (ABD). The meeting time on Fridays at 8:00 am is not conducive for the public to attend the meetings and at times the doors are locked. During the meeting he attended the conversation centered on Scenic Hudson and open space. Norman Greig suggested the AOSC should have a person attend the meetings so the farmers' concerns are listened to before it is passed onto the Zoning Review Committee. When the law is presented to the public, it is too late, comments are ignored and the presented law is not modified. Ken Migliorelli offered to attend this Friday, Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>.

It was felt that the laws of the past have been changed so as to only include what is specifically listed in the law for ancillary farm uses. *Norman Greig* gave an example of him using his B-1 District property on Rt. 9 for tractor sales but he was issued a "cease and desist" order. He noted that this property's history included Kiel tractor sales. He felt that the town is too restrictive on the types of businesses in a B-1. He was referred to a B-2 district behind the firehouse for tractor sales.

*Pete Hubbell* noted the AOSC spent lots of time reviewing and inputting on the uses within the ABD. It was felt that the ITF is changing the accepted code to narrow the uses without due consideration to the farmers potential uses in a changing economic climate.

*John Hardeman* felt the ITF is a select group of people who are driving the town to what they want and in effect yuppifying the area with open space and homogenizing the population through economics. The Red Hook population should remain inclusively diversified.

*Norman Greig* referenced his car club's temporary race track event. In order to get an interpretation, he had to pay an escrow, and then other departments were called in for review. All the fees were charged to the applicant yet the reviewers were not responsible or accountable to the applicant. So a \$500 income turned into a \$5,000 expense which gives no profit for the next 5 years. This does not help the farmer stay in business.

*Hannah Beal* felt uncomfortable as she is not an expert in the technicalities of the zoning. Others suggested as a farmer all she has to do is ask questions and offer suggestions.

*John Hardeman* said Scenic Hudson is primarily interested in Open Space. He's not sure if they have anyone covering Ag issues. When Tripp wanted to install his hay barn they wouldn't let him enclose it. In the past, for example, if you did welding you could have a welding business on the farm or change and install tires for extra income.

*Marina Michahelles* will contact Scenic Hudson regarding their written views on the ABD. She wanted to know if there are minutes from the ITF that the AOSC could review. Linda Keeling noted that Bill O'Neill takes the minutes and reports back to the town board at their public meeting. Marina was concerned with the zoning comparables to Pine Plains and Columbia County who seem to promote and encourage farming and ancillary uses.

*Pete Hubbell* felt the ITF is not interested in commercial farming operations but rather the smaller farm-to-table businesses.

*Norman Greig* will bring in a copy of the codes for the next meeting. It was suggested members bring in a list of future business activities that might be applied to farming in the ABD.

**Motion to Adjourn:**

**MOTION:** *Norman Greig* motioned to adjourn the meeting, *Pete Hubbell* seconded, all agreed.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

**Next Meeting:** The next regular meeting will be **Tuesday, November 22, 2016.**

Respectfully submitted,

Linda J. Keeling, AOSC Secretary