

# AGOS COMMITTEE MINUTES

JANUARY 25, 2010

## ATTENDANCE:

Bill O'Neil, Town Board Liaison  
Mary Ann Johnson, Co-chair  
Larry Thetford, Co-chair  
Rich Biezynski  
Norman Greig  
Lindsey Lusher Shute  
Ken Migliorelli  
Karen Schneller-MacDonald  
KayCee Wimbish, committee clerk

No members of the public were present.  
Meeting was called to order.

### 1. **Committee / Town Board Liaison**

Bill O,Neil was introduced as the committee liaison. He described his role as such and explained how he is working through the Intermunicipal Taskforce (IT). He hopes to work out concerns about the proposed Agricultural Business District (ABD). He wants to sit down with farmers about the ABD.

### 2. **Committee Clerk**

KayCee Wimbish was introduced as the new committee clerk.

Mary Ann clarified that meeting notes get circulated to Mary Ann and Larry, minutes get approved by the committee and are then sent to the town board.

### 3. **Reappointments**

Larry, Rich, and Ken all agreed to be reappointed to another 2 year term. Mary Ann and Larry agreed to be co-chairs for the year 2010.

### 4. **Review 2009 minutes and approve**

June through November minutes were emailed to the committee members. Norman moved to approve the minutes as they stand, Lindsey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### 5. **Review proposed agricultural business district (ABD) survey, plan course of action.**

The committee discussed their concerns that the survey might be confusing to the average landowner. Mary Ann clarified that the survey is just an opportunity for people to understand what the options are. This is in response to the public indicating that do not understand. The survey is about awareness and education. Landowners can get the basic concept, then talk to folks if they have more questions. Norman wants to add a final question asking for input: Do you have other ideas for preserving farmland in Red Hook? Lindsey volunteered to add Normans question to the survey, then go through the draft survey with several neighbors in

the ABD to gauge their response. This draft survey will not be left with the neighbors and Lindsey will make final changes based on the neighbor responses. This will occur by the end of the week and conclude work on the survey.

#### **6. Resume review of proposed agricultural business district**

The last committee meeting left off at the permitted development potential. Mary Ann asked if the members of this committee understood the 2 options: limited development option and the conservation option? If the committee understands them, it can then also address alternative options. After discussing the sale of development rights and retained farmstead units, it was concluded that new homes do not have to be built on the existing farmstead complex. Mary Ann clarified that if one chooses the conservation easement, then the farmstead complex is identified, but she will double check that the farmstead complex does not limit development conservation as noted under 3f under conservation.. It was also clarified that there was no restriction on agricultural development; The restrictions apply only to residential development. The committee needs to ask if the plan leaves room for negotiations between the landowner and the conservancy organization regarding the size of the farmstead complex.

With the limited development option, the committee clarified that retained units within the ABD can be transferred to another parcel within the ABD. According to sec. C one does not have to go through the subdivision process when building in the farmstead complex.

#### **7. New Business**

The committee discussed open space and cropland preservation vs. preservation of viable agriculture. Some members believe that the selling of development rights creates a short term solution to a long term problem. It keeps houses off of cropland, but it does not guarantee that farmers can afford land and have access to land. In many cases it creates a situation where agricultural land becomes part of an estate and farmers are just tenants on the land. Other members agreed, but also stated that we have to start somewhere and keep the land open.

Lindsey attended the NOFA conference and went to a workshop on “The Town That Food Saved” by a person from Hardwick, VT where they have transformed the local economy using food and farming.. There has been an investment in the town and farming has taken off. A key component to the process was a series of agricultural roundtable discussions on what is needed. It is basically a forum to have conversations about farmers helping farmers. Lindsey will work at getting the process started and Miriam Latzer will host the first roundtable. She will let us know the topic and when and where.

#### **7. Date and Time of next meeting :**

February 22, last Monday in Feb., at 7 pm.

Meeting adjourned

