

AGOS
May 24, 2010

Present:

Mary Ann Johnson, Co-Chair

Larry Thetford, Co-Chair

Norman Greig

Ken Migliorelli

Richie Biezynski

Jim Staiges, prospective committee member

Cara Watkins-Bates, Scenic Hudson

Art Collins, Dutchess Land Conservancy

KayCee Wimbish, Secretary

A. OLD BUSINESS

1. Review March 29 and April 26 Minutes and Approve

Motioned to Approve.

Motion seconded and March and April minutes approved unanimously.

2. Candidate for AGOS Committee

Jim Staiges sent a letter to the Town Board expressing his interest in joining the committee. The committee reviewed Jim's letter. Jim spoke about his desires to join the committee, emphasizing his farming and tax experiences.

Larry explained to Jim what the role of the committee is, emphasizing the advisory nature of the committee.

3. Survey Response Updates

19 people indicated they wanted to meet with the AGOS. Larry has had contact with 17 and he and members of the Intermunicipal Task Force have met with 3 people. Larry has contacted many landowners who have indicated that they don't really want to meet.

There are four landowners that the group still needs to meet with. The most challenging part is coordinating all the people's schedules.

4. Farmer Roundtable Update

Mead Orchard Tour has been rescheduled for Tuesday, May 25th at 6 pm.

B. NEW BUSINESS

1. Land Preservation

Carrie Watkins-Bates from Scenic Hudson and Art Collins from Dutchess Land Conservancy were in attendance to give an update on the West Kerley Corners Project. In 2008 15 landowners on West Kerley Corners expressed interest in preserving their land, 14 submitted applications to the Town Board. It is a complex project. Now the two organizations have met with the landowners who are still interested and they are working on formulating a plan to move it forward.

Norm asked how many acres.

Carrie answered that it is about 1,000 acres from 9 to 9G.

Norm asked what percentage is farm land?

Carrie said most of the parcels are actively farmed by a primary farmer or leased.

Art indicated there is an impressive amount of prime soil; an impressive percentage.

It was clarified that it does not include the Central Hudson parcel.

The Bulkley parcel was one of the original parcels, but has since been donated to the Winakee Land Trust.

SH and DLC are committed to working with landowners and figuring out a way to preserve the land.

Norman asked what the time frame is.

Carrie and Art explained that the biggest uncertainty is the economy. State money is not going to be available; the county funding is also in limbo. SC and DLC are working with the landowners and as monies become available, they will help connect the landowners with the funding.

It was clarified that there are 1.2 million dollars left in the town's fund from the 2003 bond.

Norman asked how the land is valued?

Carrie explained that an independent appraiser that is licensed in NYS and certified through a national appraiser organization. They give the value of the land without restrictions vs. the land with the development and the difference is the value of the conservation easement.

Norman asked if an easement has ever been written that requires that the landowner makes his income from farming?

Carrie and Art explained that it hasn't been done in the Hudson Valley. Other states and areas of the country are more advanced in this area. One type of easement being written is an OPAV, option to purchase at agricultural value; it is a rider on an easement that says that the land has to be subject to the easement and that the land can only be sold at its agricultural value.

Another option is a 3 party agreement between a landowner and the farmer.

2. Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement on the Proposed Zoning Public Hearing-June 10 at High School 7 PM at June 10th.

The committee questioned why they are explaining the zoning when it was created by the Intermunicipal Task Force.

Mary Ann and Larry clarified that Bill O'Neill and Harry Colgan are the ones explaining the zoning.

3. Correspondence

A letter was written to Larry that explained a situation between a farmer and a neighbor where the farmer was forced to get a permit from the Town to build a fence. Norm moved to write a letter to the Town Board encouraging Red Hook to pass a local ordinance that ensures that farmers don't have to obtain permits for fencing..

The motion was seconded and passed.

See below for the letter that was drafted.

4. Other

C. Date and Time of Next Meeting

June 28 at 7 pm