

COLUMBIA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD MEETING
January 4, 2007

The meeting of the AFPB was called to order at 9:35 am by Chairman Marian Dunbar at First Pioneer Farm Credit. Those also present were: Roland Vosburgh, Joel Allen, Suzette Booy, Betty Young, and Jim Waterhouse. Regrets were received from C. Colaruotolo .

The minutes of the November 2, 2006 meeting were reviewed and approved as presented.

Chairman Dunbar asked about our potential meeting with the Columbia County Assessors Association. Their next meeting is January 10th at 7pm at the Office of Real Property Services in Hudson. This has been an interest of members of the AFPB for some time. Suzette reported on the format of their meetings, which generally last about an hour. She did mention our possible attending to the Chairman of that group, Howard Gleason, and he was receptive. It was suggested we didn't all need to attend, but maybe some reps. i.e. Roland, Joel, Marian, Jim. She said there are generally 18 to 20 +/- assessors (of the possible 30 +) in attendance representing 19 or so municipalities in the county. They do meet the second Wednesday of the month. Joel has a conflict with the second Wednesday. It was suggested that we could meet with them in February since that meeting has been moved to Feb. 21, the third Wednesday. The topics we want to discuss with them include: Agricultural Districts, Agricultural Value Assessments, Conservation Easements, the duties of the AFPB, our proposed Plan and such. It was agreed that Suzette would broach our meeting with them at the Jan. 10th meeting, get their feedback and suggestions for topics of discussion and report back to us. We suggested it might also be practical to have Mark Twentyman from the State office of Real Property Services also attend that meeting with us. Betty moved we plan to meet with the Assessors on Feb. 21st, pending the OK from Suzette and Chairman Gleason. Seconded and approved unanimously.

Roland and Joel, with the help of Jim Waterhouse and his computer, introduced those attending to the new AFPB web site located at the Columbia County web site: <www.columbiacountyny.com> We walked through the entire web site and a couple of mistakes were identified. We also questioned the lack of the links being "live." We will need to work with Sherri Royce at the County Office of Data Processing, who has been doing the web site work for us, in making these live so anyone searching the web site can go directly to a linked web site by clicking on that address. We also reviewed the attachments that we agreed to link to the Plan. These are not yet collected in one place so Roland agreed to pursue these and get them to Sherri for scanning and "attaching to" the Plan on the web. While we agreed the pressure for a Plan has seemingly subsided considerably, it was agreed we continue to pursue and modify the Plan and prepare for a public hearing to adopt the Plan.

Roland reported on the public hearings he and Joel hosted for Agricultural Districts #1 in Copake and #2 in Stuyvesant in late November. Good feed back at both. Will be packaged and forwarded to the County Government Committee for their recommendation and then approval and then to the NYS Dept. of Agr. and Markets for Re-certification.

He also stated that a public hearing was hosted, by him and Joel, in early December for the applicants under Section 303B. These had come in through the annual 30 day sign up period in October. There were no objections and these applications will also be forwarded to the County Government Committee for recommendation and then approval and then to the NYS Dept. of Agr. and Markets for Re-certification.

Roland reported on the December meeting of the Chamber of Commerce's Agricultural Business Committee regarding their planning for the annual Agricultural Brunch in March and the Agricultural Bus Tour on June 30th. He said they are contemplating featuring the Farm to Chef effort at the Brunch and looking for specific speakers to address this topic. They meet again on Jan. 10th.

He also mentioned the Planning for the Future of Agriculture in the Hudson Valley conference held at CGCC that he, Joel, Marian, and Betty attended from the AFPB. There were probably 75 to 80 in attendance.

Roland called our attention to the Nov. 16, 2006 Notice of Intent the AFPB received from Dutchess County Public Works. They are looking to expand the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, Phase IV from the Village of Millerton in Dutchess County north into the Town of Ancram, Agricultural District #1. While they had the District numbers wrong, Roland said doing this across county borders is not all that unusual, but agreed to follow up with a phone call.

Joel distributed copies of an email he had just received from Eric Ooms, Farm Bureau President, announcing the Chatham Agricultural Film Festival on Sunday, Jan. 14th, 1 to 4 at the Crandall Theatre in Chatham. All are invited to this free event with a donation of a non-perishable food item for the Chatham Food Pantry the only admission charge. A number of agricultural films, some local, will be shown.

The Board agreed to meet next on Thursday, (the first Thursday of the month) Feb. 1st at 9:30am at First Pioneer Farm Credit.

With no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15pm.

Respectfully
Joel W. Allen, secretary

submitted,