

COLUMBIA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD MEETING
February 1, 2007

The meeting of the AFPB was called to order at 9:37 am by Chairman Marian Dunbar at First Pioneer Farm Credit. Those also present were: Roland Vosburgh, Joel Allen, Suzette Booy, Betty Young, Jim Waterhouse and Mallory Mort.

The first item of business was the review of our plans to meet with the Columbia County Board of Assessors at their monthly meeting at 7pm on Wednesday, Feb. 21st at county office of Real Property Services, 560 Warren St., Hudson. Suzette reported that the Assessor's Chairman, Howard Gleason, was very happy to welcome representatives of the AFPB to their meeting on the 21st. She requests that we use the side entrance to the building on 6th Street. That door will be open till 7. After that, you'll have to call her office at 828-7334. Chairman Marian will introduce those AFPB members in attendance and give a brief introduction to the AFPB, its role and responsibilities, using the cover page to our web site. Suzette agreed to copy and distribute the AFPB Roster from our web site. She also suggests we can find a listing of the county assessors at the county web site <www.columbiacountyny.com/> It was also suggested we have copies of the DRAFT Plan to distribute. She expects around 20+/- to attend. She also agreed to extend an invitation to Mark Twentyman of the NYS Office of Real Property Services, to attend. Our meeting will be a "meet and greet" for the two groups with the hopes that topics for future meetings will be identified. Topics that may be addressed include: proper agr value assessments, AVA uniformity/consistency across the county, tagging properties that receive an AVA, and to extend our appreciation to the Assessors for their outreach efforts in reminding landowners of the need to renew their AVA. Joel mentioned that he has heard said in several public meetings that there are landowners in Columbia County who are receiving an AVA who do not deserve it. He finds this hard to believe, but would like it to be addressed. It was agreed that not all members of the AFPB need attend this "meet and greet". Those volunteering to attend included: Chairman Dunbar, Roland, Joel, Mallory, Betty, and of course, Suzette. Suzette also brought us up-to-date on some of the more recent changes in the status of town assessors, some being made sole assessors and recent resignations.

Joel reported on the "Farm Film Fest" held at the Crandall Theater in Chatham on Sunday, January 14th. There were several films shown to a packed house. Some of the films were a bit dated and some were very short, i.e. 3 minutes for Golden Harvest's "Packing House." The feature film of the afternoon was the brand new "Chatham Grown", a 21 minute film commissioned by Keep Chatham Farming and the Chatham Agricultural Partnership, and presented by the Chatham Film Club and Columbia Land Conservancy. It was filmed and directed by Courtney Hunt. Did a real nice job of introducing some of the various agricultural operations within the Town of Chatham. Joel was given a copy of the "Chatham Grown" film on DVD, but due to technical difficulties beyond our control, Jim was unable to play it today on the computer equipment he had. Maybe next meeting.

Chairman Marian reported on a letter she received from NYS Dept. of Agr. and Markets which indicated the only funding approved in this last go round of PDR proposals from CLC (Ancram, Stuyvesant, and Chatham) was the Chaseholm Farm in Ancram and then only a portion of that

Ancram proposal. The letter stated that there were 39 proposals submitted representing 58.1 million dollars in requests and only 22 were selected awarding 21.5 million dollars. Not sure if these others will be re-submitted or not.

She continued to review a number of clippings and article with us that she had compiled from various sources.

Roland reported that he is working on the attachments for the PLAN. These will be added to the AFPB web site directly or via links to where they can be found. He also reported that he and Joel have prepared worksheets for Agricultural Districts 3 and 4 and these were mailed to 341 landowners in the two districts currently in the early stages of their 8 year anniversary reviews. These worksheets will be returned to and compiled by Joel.

Joel reported on a GIS (Geographical Information Systems) program which Cooperative Extension will be offering at their Spring Gardening Day 2007 program at CGCC on March 31st. GIS and GPS are programs that we have been talking about for some time that might be able to help us conduct the Agr. District Reviews, but admitted, we're not really sure how. William Hohmann of Kinderhook, a friend of Extension and former consulting forester, will be offering this class. He has recently obtained training and a degree in this and wants to give back to the community and support CCE. The class is called "GIS for Dummies" and will be a beginner course with handouts and a CD of pertinent programs. Watch for the announcement.

The Board agreed to meet next on Thursday, March 1st at 9:30 at First Pioneer Farm Credit.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Joel W. Allen, secretary.