

Columbia County Ag & Farmland Protection Board  
Meeting Minutes  
October 8, 2009, First Pioneer Farm Credit, Claverack, NY

The meeting was called to order by Chair Marian Dunbar at 9:33 A.M. Members present were: Jim Waterhouse, Jim Davenport, Mallory Mort, Kenneth Flood and Steve Hadcock. Guests present were Roland Vosburgh of the Columbia County Planning and Economic Development and Tom Crowell of Columbia Land Conservancy. A quorum was present.

Chair Dunbar started off by asking Tom Crowell to discuss the Town of Chatham Farmland Protection Plan. Tom stated that within 12 months, the plan will become part of the Town Comprehensive Plan. He also stated that the suggestions that were made at the previous AFPB meeting were placed in an addendum and was included with the plan. Tom reported that the Town of Chatham Board did approve the plan with the addendum. Marian asked who the letter of support for the protection plan should be sent to. Tom suggested that the letter should be addressed to Supervisor Jesse DeGroot and carbon copied Chatham Agricultural Project member Mary Gail Beibel. Marian offered a critique that in the future if the Columbia Land Conservancy is involved in formulating town farmland protection plans to make them more generic by avoiding placing specific names of groups in the document. The reason is that these documents will last for many years and organizations participation may change in the future and avoid having to revise the document. Roland stated that he feels more comfortable about this model of farmland protection plans since the local people who know the scope of agriculture in their respective towns are the best to craft the plan. Motion made by Jim Waterhouse to approve the Town of Chatham Agricultural Protection Plan and authorize the Chair to write a letter of support to the Town of Chatham Supervisor. The motion is seconded by Mallory Mort. The motion passed.

Roland asked Tom that in light of tough economic times for farmers, was wondering if had an increase in farmers looking to sell development rights. Tom estimates that there has been a slight increase, but the amount funds at the state level to purchase development rights is basically non-existent.

Chair Dunbar reported on behalf of Suzette Booy on the county GIS tax maps. Suzette and Laura Sager, at Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District, are supplying funds to hire a company to close the polygons that remain in the county.

Marian asked Ken if there was anything to report. Ken mentioned that the Agriculture Subcommittee of the County Economic Develop and Planning has been formed. The first meeting was cancelled, but will typically meet before the regular committee meeting.

Marian asked Jim Davenport if federal bill HR875 was discussed at the Farm Bureau Board of Directors meeting. Jim Davenport did not believe it was discussed and mentioned that Farm Bureau had a conference call with Senator Gillabrand's agriculture committee.

Roland and Steve have been progressing on planning on a meeting this fall that will what Agricultural Districts do. Bob Somers, of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, will

be the main speaker and talk about agricultural district law. Steve has contacted and secured Bob to come on October 29 and he has accepted. Steve has prepared a flyer of the meeting and distributed it for input. Roland and Steve will work on publicizing the meeting to the target audience. Mallory suggested inviting realtors to the meeting. Steve mentioned that he will contact the Columbia-Greene Board of Realtors to see if they can publicize it. Ken suggested that if don't get many realtors to this meeting, then contact the Board of Realtors and attempt to be on the agenda of their monthly meeting.

Marian brought up that Steve received a request from an intern from Columbia Land Conservancy for brochures regarding agriculture. Steve drafted a brochure promoting the AFPB and was discussed briefly at the last meeting. Further discussion was tabled at the last meeting. Marian drafted some text that could be put into the document and Steve will come up with a second draft.

Jim Waterhouse asked Ken if he has heard anything from NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets about the grant proposal stands for the county farmland protection plan. Ken mentioned that he has not heard anything officially.

Roland mentioned that Patrice from his office attended a New York Planning Annual Conference and brought back a paper on case law about eminent domain. Roland made a copy of the paper and distributed it to Board members present. The Court of Appeals upheld the Town of Brookhaven taking 39 acres by eminent domain to prevent the land being developed.

Motion made by Jim Waterhouse and seconded by Mallory to approve the May and September, 2009 minutes. Motion passed.

Roland mentioned that the Section 303b time for Columbia County is this month - October. Roland reviewed the process of what takes place if there are any applications for landowners.

Meeting adjourned at 11:04 A.M.

The next meeting will take place on November 5 and be held at First Pioneer Farm Credit.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen E. Hadcock  
Secretary