

“Unofficial”
Land Preservation Committee Minutes
November 9, 2011 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Barrett; Supervisors Peck, A. Johnson, and Sausville; Jason Kemper, Jamie O’Neill, Planning; Joe Grasso, Charlton; Press.

Chairman Barrett called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

The first item on the agenda was to review grant applications received by the Committee during the 2011 application period. There were a total of five including four farmland and one open space applications totaling \$964,225.

Chairman Barrett mentioned that the working group met a few times during the past months to talk about past grants that have not closed and to make sure that grant application packages were complete. He stated that he was impressed with the quality of applications received, and that it does not make the committee’s job easy.

Chairman Barrett stated that the Town of Northumberland had applied to our program for the Foster Sheep Farm in 2010. The farm is approximately 143 acres along the Hudson River in the town of Northumberland. With the assistance of Saratoga PLAN, the application was successful in obtaining federal grant money from the Farmland and Ranchland Protection Program. The total project cost is estimated to be \$481,000, which the County Land Preservation Committee voted to support in April 2011. The federal government announced the Fosters were successful applicants this fall. The County agreed to contribute \$240,300 of the \$500,000 that is available for grants this year, leaving \$259,700 to award to applicants for this year.

The following applications were reviewed:

The Cocozzo Farm requested \$259,700 to place an easement on approximately 70 acres in the Town of Stillwater on a farm that totals 331 acres. The right will be reserved for a trail along the eastern boundary of the farm that will connect to the Saratoga National Historical Park. Other groups have shown an interest in this project, placing the entire farm under easement in the future. It is anticipated that the entire farm will be preserved in the near future.

The total Foster Sheep Farm and the Cocozzo Farm awards equal the \$500,000 that was budgeted for the 2011 budget year.

The County Planning staff has reviewed a number of projects that have still not closed. One of them is located in the Town of Clifton Park, the Caresse project from 2009.

Chairman Barrett stated that this project has stalled and it does not appear it will be completed. This project was awarded \$70,000.

During the working committee meeting, the committee indicated that the Clifton Park Mohawk River application, submitted this grant round, is a high priority. The project will provide over 2000 feet of river access and a beach area for public access. The Town of Clifton Park has requested \$100,000 from the County with a total project cost of \$315,000.

The Committee discussed that given the fact that the Caresse project has stalled, they would be willing to withdraw the \$70,000 from 2009 and move this money to the 2011 Riverfront Access Project. The Committee agreed to this recommendation.

Mr. Peck stated that all the projects this year were outstanding, and the whole county benefits from projects like these.

A motion was made by Mr. Sausville, seconded by Mr. Grasso to approve the Foster Sheep Farm award of \$240,300, Cocozzo Farm award of \$259,700 and the shift of \$70,000 from the 2009 Town of Clifton Park award to the 2011 Town of Clifton Park Mohawk River application. Unanimous.

Discussion took place with regard to a request to have an early disbursement from a County Farmland Protection grant that was awarded to the Town of Saratoga in 2009. The Hooegeveen Farm has applied and been awarded \$2,052,000 in State funding, with a contract in place with the State for that dollar amount.

New York State awarded a Farmland Protection grant to the Hooegeveen's in 2008 for over 400 acres in the Town of Saratoga. Saratoga County agreed to provide \$350,000 towards the required local match in 2009. Due to the economic conditions at the State it has been requested that a portion of the \$350,000 be provided to the town to complete the necessary ancillary items such as survey, appraisal and title work. This will help reduce economic hardship of the Hooegeveen's to get the project done as these projects can take anywhere from three to four years to complete. The Town of Saratoga will receive the money and maintain the account for the Hooegeveen Farm. If the project does not close or is withdrawn, the Town of Saratoga will be responsible for returning the funds to Saratoga County.

A motion was made by Mr. Peck, seconded by Mr. Grasso to release funds to the Town of Saratoga in the amount of \$30,500 for ancillary costs associated with the Hooegeveen Farmland Protection Project and reducing the County grant award at closing to \$319,500. Unanimous.

On a motion made by Mr. Sausville, seconded by Mr. Johnson the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.