

# LAND PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

October 4, 2007 – 3:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Peck; Supervisors A. Johnson, Sausville, Yepsen; Tom Lewis, Saratoga Springs; Jason Kemper, Planning; Alane Chinian, Saratoga P.L.A.N.; Press

Chairman Peck called the meeting to order.

Mr. Lewis moved to approve the minutes of the April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Mr. Sausville seconded. Unanimous.

Chairman Peck stated we will be discussing the grant program. This year, we were budgeted for \$500,000, he said. He stated we received a pile of excellent applications for the preservation of open space or farmland protection. He said the subcommittee met to work through the applications. He stated this is a continuing process of balancing the gray infrastructure along with the green.

Mr. Johnson said the applications received were more than we had money for, but they were all very good. Maybe in the future, we can fund more of these projects, he said. Chairman Peck stated the applications totaled \$2.5 million.

Mr. Lewis asked if we were the only county doing this. Ms. Chinian stated three counties down state are doing this via a real estate transfer fee – Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties. She stated Columbia County has done something in the past. Mr. Sausville asked if Saratoga County was going to consider the real estate transfer tax as a way of funding open space. With a real estate transfer tax, we could impose that on land transfers and have a dedicated account for open space, he said. He stated it is optional for municipalities. They net out affordable housing, so there is no transfer tax on a house below the median, he said. He mentioned developers are using up the land and converting it to asphalt. He said the way this legislation is crafted is for

individual towns, but it could be for a county, he stated. He said it cleared the Assembly last year but not the Senate, and it has no adverse affect on a county. Chairman Peck said he doesn't know if the County is looking into this, but it is a good point.

Chairman Peck presented the projects recommended for the County's grant of \$500,000:

**Mr. Johnson moved to approve \$186,343 for Sweeney Phase II in the Town of Malta. Mr. Lewis seconded. Unanimous.** Chairman Peck stated applications were received from them for the Town of Malta, that connected to their previous award, and one in Stillwater for \$373,683. He said we thought it would make more sense to connect the previous preserved area.

**Mr. Sausville moved to approve \$84,000 for Larmon, Town of Saratoga, 39.77 acres that has access along Fish Creek. Mr. Johnson seconded. Unanimous.**

**Mr. Lewis moved to approve \$28,000 for Stranahan, Town of Northumberland, 33.5 acres as an add on to the Wilton Wildlife Preserve. Mr. Johnson seconded. Unanimous.**

**Mr. Lewis moved to approve \$100,000 for Boswell II, Town of Wilton, 97.6 acres, for land for the Nature Conservancy. Mr. Sausville seconded. Unanimous.**

**Mr. Sausville moved to approve \$15,750 for the Champlain Canal/Hudson River in the Town of Saratoga, 25.35 +/- acres. Mr. Johnson seconded. Unanimous.**

**Mr. Johnson moved to approve \$7,875 for the Village of Victory, for one acre of woodland along Fish Creek. Mr. Lewis seconded. Unanimous.**

**Mr. Lewis moved to approve \$78,032 for the Town of Northumberland, 100 acres, Blanding's Turtle Habitat. Mr.**

**Sausville seconded. Unanimous.** Chairman Peck said they are seeking Environmental Protection funds as well.

Chairman Peck stated these are the seven grant applications awarding \$500,000. He said we received many applications we were unable to fund. He cited one in particular, LaBarge, Town of Saratoga, that is close to the National Cemetery. This property is a very good farmland preserve, and they were seeking \$464,580 for 100 acres. We didn't award this because that would have taken the majority of our grant, he stated. These are the type of projects I want to see before this Committee and County, he said. Mr. Lewis said when large projects come in that exceeds our budget, we may want to consider an allocation from 2008 and from 2009 so that it isn't eaten up by one project. Chairman Peck said he would talk to the County Attorney about that.

Mr. Kemper stated there were 13 requests totaling over \$2.5 million. Chairman Peck said it saddens him that we couldn't fund projects like LaBarge, but we had to take the best value for our dollar.

Mr. Sausville requested a report from the Planning Department on the progress and shortfalls on our Green Infrastructure Plan. Chairman Peck stated progress has been made on the Zim Smith project. Mr. Johnson stated this could be put on the agenda for his Economic Development Committee meeting. Mr. Lewis said we should give every town a map of their town with an overlay of the canal systems, and that any time an applicant comes in, the town would have this map. Mr. Kemper said every town received a copy of the Green Infrastructure Plan. We do have some of that technical capability, he stated. He said up until now, we haven't done much outreach. After we increase our capability, I believe that will improve, he stated. Mr. Lewis said this type of map would have to go to planning boards, Supervisors and town board members.

Ms. Yepsen stated this Plan is a little overwhelming, and each town could look to see what it means to them. It is a County

project, but we need everybody to do their part, she said. Mr. Kemper said he has opened this up to every town, but some have not taken part. Chairman Peck requested Mr. Kemper to have a report prepared for next month's Economic Development Committee meeting. Mr. Johnson said he would like recommendations on how we can do better.

Mr. Sausville asked if there were any member items for open space. If we do not ask, we will not get, he said. Mr. Kemper stated it has to be for something we know that we will make happen.

Chairman Peck thanked the Committee for working through these grants. We held two subcommittee meetings that took over two hours each dissecting each application, he added. Mr. Kemper said we tried to make the application process as loose as possible, but maybe next year we could tighten that up a little bit. Mr. Lewis suggested having an Excel sheet with a grid process with the costs for next year.

On a motion by Mr. Sausville, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Sodemann