

LAND PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

April 15, 2009 – 2:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Peck; Supervisors A. Johnson, Sausville; Southworth; Tom Lewis; Lynn Schumann; Jason Kemper, Jaime O'Neill, Planning; Marie Trabka, Saratoga P.L.A.N.; Barbara Thomas, LWV; Steve Williams, Daily Gazette

Chairman Peck called the meeting to order.

Chairman Peck welcomed the Executive Director of P.L.A.N., Marie Trabka.

Chairman Peck said today's meeting is to set up timelines for the new applications. We have \$750,000, the same as last year, he said. He stated the projects are very competitive. We made some changes a year ago to the application, he said.

Ms. O'Neill distributed copies of this year's Farmland/Open Space Preservation Program criteria and application forms. She said the dates of acceptance of these applications will be from May 1 to July 30. Chairman Peck said we will give Planning through August to look the applications over. Ms. O'Neill said the Committee usually meets the end of August. Mr. Kemper said if there are any concerns about this application, maybe we can receive them within a week

Chairman Peck said once we make an award, it may take two to three years to come to fruition. Mr. Kemper needs to bring this to the Economic Development Committee to reauthorize that money from year to year. He said sometimes, the project does not come to fruition. He recommended that after three years, a project should become null and void unless the applicant comes to the Committee to request another year to close. We need time limits so that for the projects not getting done, we can get them off the books, he said. Mr. Lewis asked if the money rolls over to something in the future. Chairman Peck said not into this program. If there available dollars not being used, the money will go back into the General Fund, he said. Ms. Schumann said it is great this program is continuing at the level it is.

Mr. Kemper said if we award grants, we try to have a signed contract within one year. That may well get set aside and reserved, he said. Ms. Schumann asked the if the County could do contracts with the contingency on receiving money from the State? Mr. Kemper said yes, that is what we do. Ms. O'Neill said usually by the end of November/mid-December, she has all of the contracts at least signed. Chairman Peck asked if three years is too long to wait? It was the consensus of the Committee to have the three-year limit.

Mr. Sausville said it seems there might be merit in scoring projects that pair up with other grant programs. Everyone is looking at the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, he said. If we could pair up our project with one of those projects, it may make for a bigger project in the long run, i.e., bikeways, he said. He said it seems like our role is more than land preservation; it is open space and recreational development as well. He said we could extend the Zim Smith Trail to implement the Green Infrastructure Plan. Could we use our resources to partner up with the feds to keep that project marching forward? Chairman Peck said he does not think there is a problem with that, as trail

systems fit into open space projects. He pointed out with recreation, we do not get into things such as Little League fields, etc. He stated we do have a Trail Committee this year, and it would make sense for them to bring us up to speed. Mr. Johnson said the Trails Committee is looking at opening up trails on three County parcels.

Mr. Sausville asked if there was money to extend the Zim Smith Trail, and could we use some of our \$750,000 to match and make that happen? Mr. Johnson said he does not believe that would be eligible under this program. Mr. Sausville asked how do we interface? Does the County have a plan to extend that trail north to south and what is the mechanism to make that happen? Chairman Peck stated that trail has been under the Economic Development Committee. Mr. Johnson said he does not think there are any plans to go further than what we have done. Mr. Kemper said he believes we are set from Underpass Road to Oak Street with the railroad, but there is nothing in writing at this point. We will need additional money to finish that, he said. If we continue north to south, there needs to be a directive from this Committee and the Board of Supervisors, he said. Mr. Sausville said the Department of Energy wants to encourage the bikeways. If there was 75% grant money to the county, are we prepared to put up our percentage to seek these monies, he asked. Chairman Peck stated the dollars always went through Economic Development. I see the dollars in this fund for acquisition of trails, he said. It would depend on the application and grants, he said. We are at \$750,000, and we know how fast that gets used up, he stated. Mr. Johnson said this funding is meant for municipalities. Chairman Peck said ultimately, we want to keep exploring these opportunities through the Green Infrastructure Plan. The Economic Development Committee has been the natural money flow for the Zim Smith Trail and those types of projects, he added.

Chairman Peck asked if there were updates on State applications; are there any pending projects going to the State? Ms. O'Neill said there is one in the Town of Saratoga that would be a sizeable request from the landowner. Chairman Peck asked what the deadline is for State applications. Ms. O'Neill said usually, they are due in September, and they award in December.

Ms. Schumann said another organization formed in Saratoga is Children In Nature Come Out And Play. She said she sits on their advisory board, and this is headed by Artie Pierce. She wants different venues and ways for us to encourage kids to get out in nature. Their first event is May 1, and they will be bringing the author of "Lost Child In The Woods" to the Spa State Park, she said. She stated there are about 20 people on the advisory board. She stated it is part of a large network in the U.S. Chairman Peck mentioned the Albany Pine Bush Executive Director spoke at the Washington/Saratoga Hudson Partnership, and he was impressed at what they do for bringing school buses of children into the educational programs they offer. They had great brochures that listed the programs they offer, he said. With busing and school budgets being tight, they want to support funding for getting the buses to come out. Ms. Schumann said she will mention that to Artie.

Mr. Sausville moved to adjourn to executive session to discuss contract negotiations. Mr. Lewis seconded. Unanimous.

The meeting returned to open session. As part of the County's \$170,000 award to the Town of Ballston for the Curtiss property, Mr. Sausville moved that \$10,050 be awarded now for reimbursement of survey and appraisal costs. If the project does not close

within two years, that money will be reimbursed from the Town of Ballston back to the County. Mr. Lewis seconded. Unanimous.

Chairman Peck said there is a signed contract with New York State and the Town of Ballston.

Mr. Kemper said if Dave Miller has any changes on the grant application, he will e-mail them to the Committee.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Sodemann