

## Land Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2011 3:00pm

County Planning Department 50 West High Street Ballston Spa NY 12020

**Committee Members Present:** Chairman, Philip Barrett, Supervisors Bill Peck, Art Johnson, Paul Sausville, and Tom Lewis, Saratoga Springs

**Staff:** Jason Kemper, Director and Jaime O'Neill County Planning Department

**Guests:** Maria Trabka, Saratoga PLAN, Joanne Yepsen, Supervisor City of Saratoga Springs, Steve Williams, The Daily Gazette

Chairman Barrett called the meeting to order at 3:00pm

First item on the Agenda was to review and establish the 2011 grant application period for County Farmland Protection and Open Space grant program. The County Planning department suggested that May 2<sup>nd</sup> to July 29<sup>th</sup> be used as the dates due to the fact that they fall on weekdays.

A discussion was held on the timeframe and all committee members agreed to the dates from May 2<sup>nd</sup> to July 29<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Kemper introduced Maria Trabka, Executive Director of Saratoga PLAN. Ms. Trabka is here to address the committee about a funding opportunity that has arisen through the Federal Government referred to as the USDA NRCS Federal Ranchlands Protection Program(FRPP).

Mr. Kemper mentioned that at some point after hearing Ms. Trabka's presentation about this opportunity, the committee may in the future want to consider changing their timeframe for applications to better align with the Federal grant cycle as the state side funding has been eliminated for the foreseeable future.

The FRPP grant is a 50/50 matching grant based on soils. Ms. Trabka was recently notified that funds are available. If the County money could be paired with Federal money from this program it is a good way to stretch the county money further and be able to complete more projects.

The State Farmland Protection Program has essentially come to a standstill due to budgetary constraints. There is no timeframe for availability of the grant money at the State level for future grant rounds. The State money has been the primary source of funding for farms with the County assisting municipalities with the 25% required local match.

Monday April 25<sup>th</sup> is the grant deadline for the FRPP. The Foster Sheep farm was submitted to the County Program in 2010 and ranked second in farmland projects but was unable to be funded due to the lack of County funds and the size of the project.

The Federal program requires that the Primary Entity have the 50% match committed at the time of application. If the Foster Sheep Farm is a successful applicant at the Federal Level, and the County Committee is willing to conditionally award money to the farm based on obtaining the Federal grant. If acceptable to the Committee, Mr. Kemper will write a letter to that affect to be submitted with the application on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Trabka stated that usually by June, the Federal government will have made their decision. The item that usually gets hung up is the actual contract between the Federal government and the primary entity.

Ms. Trabka explained that PLAN is the primary entity in this process because it can demonstrate that it holds and monitors easements which is a requirement by the program. Saratoga County would be a secondary entity as it would be supplying the match that is required...

Once you are awarded the grant, then you can keep submitting for 3 years on a continuous basis. The Federal government sometimes makes a quick RFP if they have money available. Therefore, it is essential that the county make this application at this point in time to be considered for project funding in the future.

Mr. Peck stated that this is an outstanding project, and Chairman Barrett agreed.

There is one point of clarification that Mr. Peck would like to discuss. There is paperwork circulating around that lists \$8,000 in management fees from Saratoga PLAN.

Mr. Peck stated that in previous discussions with Alane that it was made clear that the Committee wants the county money to go straight to the projects. That this project management work is PLAN's mission and he is not comfortable with giving \$8,000 to PLAN. Ms. Trabka had already stated that the Foster's have agreed to paying stewardship fees so why isn't the project management costs coming from somewhere else?

Mr. Sausville stated that a lot of work has to get done, do we have to have PLAN do that work?

Mr. Kemper stated that PLAN has to hold the easement under that grant. Therefore it makes sense that they perform the management work.

Chairman Barrett said that the grant program allows up to 10% of the County Grant Award amount to be used to pay for ancillary costs. Mr. Lewis stated that the grant money should only be used for Land Acquisition. Discussion followed.

Chairman Barrett suggested that Ms. Trabka approach the Foster's for PLAN's management fee or find an alternate source for the fees.

Chairman Barrett made a motion to approve the application based on the receiving the Federal Grant and PLAN securing the \$8,000 management fees from another source other than the County Grant Program. Mr. Sausville, seconded the motion, motion carried 6-0.

Chairman Barrett stated that this was a great project, the County and PLAN make great project partners and continue to be fiscally responsible.

On another note, Chairman Barrett brought up the Carrese Forest project in the Town of Clifton Park that was awarded a County grant in the amount of \$100,000 in 2009. There has been work happening on the project but there is a chance that an agreement will not be reached. He would like the Committee to consider allowing Clifton Park to retain the \$100,000 and use it for another project.

Supervisor Yepsen from the City of Saratoga Springs updated the Committee on the Kayaderosseras Blue Trailway project that the County awarded \$30,000 to the City for acquisition of 5 acres along the Kayaderosseras. Two appraisals have been performed and they have a large disparity in value. It appears that a third appraisal will need to be conducted. The County Planning Staff has provided the City with 3 appraisers and quotes for performing the work. The City Council was meeting that night and Supervisor Yepsen would bring the item up to the Council and get back to the County Committee.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr.Sausville, Seconded by Mr.Peck, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45pm.