

## LAND PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

**April 10, 2006 – 2:00 p.m.**

PRESENT: Chairman Peck; Supervisors Sausville; Keyrouze; Yepsen; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Heather Mallozzi, Town of Malta; Julie Stokes, Region 5 Rep.; John Behan, Melissa Barry, Behan Planning; Susan Sutch, Town of Galway; Stan Weeks, Town of Greenfield; Larry Benton, Jaime O'Neill, Planning Dept.; Robert Bryant, Saratoga Co. Snowmobile Club Assn.; Alane Chinian, Laura Welles, Saratoga P.L.A.N.; Jennifer Viggiani, Town of Clifton Park; Tom Lewis, Saratoga Springs; David Miller, Town of Clifton Park; Press

Chairman Peck called the meeting to order.

Chairman Peck stated the Saratoga County Farmland and Open Space Grant Application is on line and is accessible through the County Planning Department. He stated a resolution of support for the projects will need to be done by the municipality, and the deadline for submission of the applications is June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Discussion was held on the draft Countywide Recommendations summary submitted by Behan Planning.

Mr. Behan said they want to make more physical recommendations. What is in this Plan is unique, and they want to hit on what can be celebrated and moved forward with. We can set the framework up. It is all about the projects, he said. He stated the public has done a lot of brainstorming. We are working on whittling these down to the big opportunities, he said. We are looking for physical elements that comprise large-scale opportunities. In the meantime, we are still accepting ideas, he stated.

Ms. Barry said their thinking was that they were going to put everything on the table and develop criteria and discuss what makes something a Countywide priority. Our focus will be on the criteria for reviewing large lists that they have right now, she said. Chairman Peck stated he does not want to exclude smaller projects that is important to the locality personally. Mr. Behan said they want to have set criteria and be able to react and respond to good ideas being developed.

Mr. Behan said in terms of this committee and the grant program, the first recommendation is to look at how to expand that to set the stage for development projects. We thought you could consider both capital projects and planning projects, he said. Mr. Sausville said a lot looks like recommendations that could apply to any county. It seems they are all important and useful tools, but we need to take it to the next step and get into the visions to make this work, i.e., maps on fishing trails and likewise, for waterway trails, he said. We need to set the vision down on paper and get the County to buy into that as part of our

planning process, he said. Chairman Peck told Mr. Sausville that he is right on target, but today we are hitting on whether this committee is agreeable to the language vision and opportunity tools. At the next meeting, we will narrow it down to overall themes, he said.

Mr. Lewis said chances are, none of those other counties are doing this. Our County set aside \$1 million or so to head us to where we want to get to. Mr. Sausville said we need to think about where we want to go now and develop tools. Chairman Peck said we need to name the generic areas at first. Ms. Viggiani said the trail ideas start to represent tourism. We will try to build big ideas and then get to specific tasks.

Mr. Bryant said we need to push our State representatives to get tax breaks for landowners who have the snowmobile trails. He said the tax breaks will allow them to keep these trails open.

Mr. Miller said the funding streams should be encouraged by the County. He said one thought is the Quality Community Grant Program which may be a resource to help. The Canal Corp may have a certain type of planned programs. There may be some State aid that should be emphasized, he added. He mentioned their Open Space Committee picked up 60 acres last month on a tax foreclosure sale, and that was a real easy thing to be able to do.

Ms. Barry said they were planning on a section dedicated to different ways municipalities do their own thing and how it could be put together. Mr. Miller stated the local plans are really the drivers, and the County is steering it. Mr. Benton said the plan will be a guide to the municipalities. He mentioned Supervisors do change from time to time. A town has to be aggressive as it wants to preserve land. Going forward, you have to change the way you do business, he said.

Chairman Peck stated County Planning will have a large role to play with transferring of information from town to town. Mr. Benton mentioned the annual Planning Conference can fulfill some goals.

Ms. Viggiani said it would be good to emphasize wetland protection as a priority and then mitigation. We need to be proactive about wetlands protection, she said.

Mr. Lewis asked if Public Works has a schedule of which County roads will be paved. Chairman Peck said yes, DPW has a 5-year plan.

Ms. Keyrouze asked where the County is regarding the Geyser Road bike path. Mr. Behan said the Plan is built on all of the local plans. That corridor is identified in both Milton's and Saratoga Springs' plans for a trail. It is not the

County's plan as a corridor, he said. Ms. Keyrouze said her concern is the bridge is in design review, and time is of the essence. She said she has a letter from Skip Scirocco as last year's chair of the Public Works Committee that stated the County was going to support this. I do not know where it stands this year, she said. She said she is trying to pool everybody together that is involved in this issue to figure out a way to get it done. Chairman Peck stated Frank Thompson is this year's chair of the Public Works Committee. It is important to keep him aware of this, he said.

Mr. Bryant mentioned the Cattaraugus County book that is put out is very good. Maybe we should do one in this County to help people understand more about trails. It is well done, he added.

Ms. Chinian introduced Laura Welles, the Conservation Program Manager at Saratoga P.L.A.N. Ms. Chinian said Saratoga P.L.A.N. has already started a resource data base. We have tried to fill a need they saw a couple of years ago. I would like an opportunity to figure out what role we can play, she said. She said they produced a database of all of their planning resources. We are trying to continually upgrade that, she said. She mentioned that they have a lending library.

Mr. Benton said they were approached about the requirement to create 2 acres of wetland for every one acre of wetland that would be filled in. You would need to have an area identified that would be a benefit to creating wetlands, he said. We thought we would have an opportunity to develop areas around the Kaydeross and to enhance it, he said.

Chairman Peck announced the schedule for the next series of public workshops:

- May 18, 6:30 – 8:30pm, Moreau Community Center
- May 24, 6:30 – 8:30pm, Edinburg Community Center
- June 1, 6:30 – 8:30pm, Charlton Presbyterian Church
- June 8, 6:30 – 8:30pm, Halfmoon Senior Center

Chairman Peck said at the end, our recommendations will go to the Law and Finance Committee and then on to the full Board of Supervisors. We need to gain the support of our colleagues to push this forward, he said. He stated the next meeting of this Committee will be May 8<sup>th</sup>. We will then look at structure and outline.

Mrs. Stokes distributed copies of a page out of the most recent edition of the League of Conservation Voters containing a section on how Saratoga County is moving on with a Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan.

Mrs. Stokes stated she represents the County on Region 5's Open Space Conservation Committee. This year, the Governor will adopt a new Statewide Open Space Plan. She distributed copies of pages listing the projects that have

been approved at the Region 5 level. She said she talked to Supervisor Trottier who is supportive of the proposed Sacandaga Corridor Project. These are lands in the Town of Hadley adjacent to the Stewart's Bridge Reservoir and the Sacandaga River below the Stewart's Bridge Reservoir Dam that are currently owned by the Open Space Conservancy and National Grid. The properties include acreage near the shoreline of the reservoir adjacent to FERC required public recreational access to the water; and along the river adjacent to the Town of Hadley Whitewater Recreation area. State ownership of the properties will enhance the existing recreational opportunities and protect the viewshed from the river corridor. The Open Space Conservancy is currently seeking to sell their properties to the State. National Grid has offered to sell their properties in the past. She said the proposal is to put it in the Open Space Plan so that it can then be sold to NYS DEC. She stated the Hadley Town Board is in favor of this. They wish to be kept in the loop as to how the property will be used. She said once DEC buys it, will go back on the tax rolls. **Mr. Miller moved to approve including this in the State's Open Space Plan. Mr. Sausville seconded. Unanimous.**

Mrs. Stokes stated the Plan is looked at every three years. The Plan adopted at the end of this year will live for three to four years, she said.

Mrs. Stokes said the State, particularly Region 5, has always been concerned about using eminent domain to take property. Region 5 says you have to have a willing seller and a willing buyer, she said. She distributed copies of changes in the language from the current Open Space Plan on the State Eminent Domain Policy. She said the language is specific to the Adirondack and Catskill Parks, but it would not apply to certain counties. She said in tomorrow's discussion, she will push for a broader region in Region 5, not just for the Adirondack Park. We want to include all of Region 5, she said. She stated there are always situations where you have a willing seller, but to get a clear title, sometimes you use eminent domain. There is a concern in the Adirondacks that the State will pursue eminent domain, but the State has not done that. Mr. Miller said he does not know what the implications are for other parts of the State. Chairman Peck said it sounds like Region 5 is the driving force for other parts of the State. Mrs. Stokes said tomorrow will be the final report of the committee on sending this as the final.

On a motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Mr. Miller, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Sodemann