

LAND PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING

May 8, 2006 – 2:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Peck; Supervisors Barrett, Sausville; Yepsen; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Jaime O'Neill, Planning; Tom Lewis, Planning Board; Stan Weeks, Town of Greenfield; Robert Bryant, Saratoga Co. Snowmobile Club Assn; Jennifer Viggiani, Town of Clifton Park; Alane Chinian, Saratoga P.L.A.N.; Pieter Litchfield, Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park; John Behan, Melissa Barry, Behan Planning; Press

Chairman Peck called the meeting to order.

Chairman Peck said the purpose of today's meeting is to go through the second part of Behan's notes.

Ms. O'Neill stated the County's Farmland and Open Space Grant Application is on the County's website. The grant cycle opened April 1 and will close June 30. She stated NYS Ag & Markets released their RFP for grants which will close on June 30 also. She said if anybody has questions on the County's grant program, call her directly.

Ms. Barry said they now have a Green Infrastructure Priorities Map in draft, and she distributed copies of it. Chairman Peck said he has met with John and Melissa to review this. He said we will be going to our next four regional meetings. He said the meeting being held in Halfmoon will be the same time as the Vietnam Veterans' Moving Wall opening ceremony. He stated that Ken DeCerco and he will be at that opening ceremony, but we probably will not change the date of that workshop. Mr. Behan said we will just carry on with that workshop.

Ms. Barry said they in trying to prioritize, they took the four maps and looked at what would make something a County priority. They organized the maps into four categories – Farmland Core Areas; Natural Systems Hubs; Greenway Corridors and Trails; and Green Infrastructure Gateways. This now is a work in progress, she said. We need you to tell us if we are missing something or ask how something got on the list, she said.

Ms. Barry explained the Farmland Core is all of the farmland; Natural Systems Hubs is the Adirondacks, Palmertown Range, Spa State Park, etc.; Greenway Corridor is those corridors that can be linked together. Adirondack Gateway would be the beginning of the Adirondacks from Corinth. Old Saratoga Gateway relates to the Revolutionary War and its significance to the Hudson River. The Horse Country gateway is for the equestrian experience. Chairman Peck pointed out that parcel is not yet determined. He said in looking at the gateways, try to emphasize green infrastructure and economic development together.

Mr. Behan stated there is a whole other layer of detail beyond this. We think this can serve as a basis of a whole new level or way of promoting the County by the way of themes, and this is a good basis for that. Ms. Barry said in every community, there is some important green infrastructure feature highlighted. Basically, we hope there is something for everyone in this plan. Mr. Behan pointed out the horse gateway is in Saratoga Springs. A more permanent type of year round facility would be a project to figure out, he said. Mr. Sausville suggested maybe a museum aspect explaining various types of horses or possibly partnering with the Fairgrounds. He said probably there could be 50 more horse farms in the County because of the interest.

Mr. Behan said they still see local municipalities being at ground level with these projects. Some projects can be done at very little cost, and others are fairly costly, he said. We talk about the idea of expanding revenue sources and identifying a permanent revenue stream, he said. He said there is an idea of capturing the growth of the real estate economy possibly considering a real estate transfer tax for sales of homes above the median and use that money to reinvest back into green infrastructure. That's an idea we are putting out there to see if there is a way to put that together on the County level. Chairman Peck said there has been legislation at the State level giving counties and municipalities the opportunity to do that. Mr. Behan said it's his understanding the County could propose home rule legislation, and it's their recommendation that the County continue to explore that. The County and municipalities could collect this fee and share in the benefits, he said. We are suggestion the County put its own proposal together for the State, he added. Chairman Peck said keep in mind the recommendation is that above the median value so that it's not hit upon the lower income houses.

Mr. Behan said they see one of the first steps is distributing information of detailed level to the municipalities. We see that being a two-way conversation and communities saying they are OK with the plan at this stage, now let's fine tune it to what they want to do. He said they talked before about expanding the County grant program to include helping develop projects within the Green Infrastructure Plan. For example, the Kaydeross/Fish Creek gateway. That connects all the way to the Hudson River, he said. There are some action projects they have identified as possible. There is an opportunity to build upon some of the natural systems, he said, i.e., there is a beautiful wetland area in Charlton/Galway. Perhaps that could be worked out with the landowners in the towns to identify what opportunities there would be with wildlife management area out there. Another idea is a Loop to Lake trail at the Sacandaga Reservoir. The Erie Canal/Champlain Canal Greenway corridor trail which is part of the Stillwater plan and expanding on that to make that a project of this Committee and the Mid County trail system.

Chairman Peck said the important piece of this is the partnering that will need to go on between municipalities and County support to the individual municipalities. Mr. Behan said it is about the projects, and they will define the actions and the partnerships. He stated there are some great projects going on now, and there are ways to expand on them to become bigger and more significant on a Countywide basis. We are very happy with the input we have had to date to get us to this point, he said.

Ms. Barry announced the next round of workshops: May 18th at the Moreau Community Center; May 24th at the Edinburg Community Center; June 1st at the Charlton Freehold Presbyterian Church; and June 8th at the Halfmoon Senior Citizens' Center. These will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Chairman Peck said to make sure that a press release gets sent out on these. Ms. O'Neill said a press release was put together and has been sent out.

Chairman Peck stated the next Committee meeting will be held on **Monday, June 12th at 2:00 p.m.**

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Sodemann