

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Initiatives

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Minutes of the Watershed Agricultural Council Meeting

August 23, 2011

I. Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Directors Present:

Fred Huneke	Darby Hartwell
John Riedl	Tom Donnelly
Steve Reed	David Cammer
Tom Hutson	Richard Giles
Chris DiBenedetto	Sally Fairbairn
Kenneth Smith	Joe Eisele
John Verhoeven	John Schwartz, NYC DEP

Directors Absent:

Barbara Howard

Others Present:

Craig Cashman	Amy Hawk
Thomas Artale	Susan Weinrich
Claire Higgins	

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2011 WAC meeting.

Motion: Steve Reed

Second: Darby Hartwell

Approved

III. Strategic Plan - NYCON

The Draft Strategic Plan was presented to the Council. Claire Higgins and Susan Weinrich presented a powerpoint highlighting the plan. There was lengthy discussion. Fred asked that Council members provide him with any questions or comments by September 10, 2011. The hope is for the Council to review the plan for the month and accept and approve it at the September Council meeting.

IV. Executive Director Report – Craig Cashman

A. Development of Easement Program Guidelines

Craig discussed the first guideline public meeting and a concern that he and Fred

share regarding amending the current DEP Easement contract to incorporate the AIP deliverables. He stated that WAC agreed last fall in a resolution to follow all aspects of the AIP deliverables such as the new transparency policy, and local consultation for example and will follow thru on our word. The concern that Fred and he have is not being able to fulfill the schedule/timetable for Easement Program guidelines outlined in the AIP. Craig stated that Jeff and he voiced a concern last Fall to DEP when the agreement was being negotiated by DEP with MOA parties. Now as we have begun the process with public meeting input and incorporation of comments into guidelines, our governance structure with unanimous consent may not allow for us to reach consensus on the crafting and re-crafting of each guideline within the timeframe specified. Essentially, by signing the amendment we would be agreeing to a deliverable timeline that we have no control of. It was agreed that this will need to have further Board discussion.

Chair's Report – Fred Huneke

A. WAC position on Gas Drilling

Fred and Craig distributed a DRAFT Gas Fracking Position Statement. The intent of this draft statement is to provide the Council with something to review, discuss and modify. The staff have been approached on numerous occasions inquiring as to WAC's position on the issue, a position developed by the Council will provide the staff with a consistent response. There was lengthy discussion regarding the position statement. Fred asked members to return their comments to him by September 12th so he can compile them for further discussion at the October Council meeting.

B. Executive Director Evaluation

As mentioned in Fred's monthly report that was distributed, he and Dave Cammer completed Craig's evaluation. They will be meeting soon to develop FY12 goals.

C. Policy Committee

Fred stated that he reconvened a Policy Committee. The Committee met on August 4th and will be meeting on a regular basis in order to be able to review and develop policies as a result of the development of the program guidelines.

V. Human Resource Committee – Tom Donnelly

Tom reported that the Human Resource Committee has been working on revising the employee manual as a result of the recent HR Audit conducted by NYCON. The Committee will meet to discuss the handbook one last time and then distribute the proposed handbook to the Council at the September WAC meeting for approval at the October WAC meeting.

VI. Audit Committee - Ken Smith

Ken distributed his written Audit Report to the Council and reviewed it at the meeting. The report detailed the recent audits of Delaware County CCE and Delaware County SWCD. Ken stated that he was impressed with the improvement of the relationship between WAC and SWCD in the few years that he has been chair of the Audit Committee. Ken also stated that Thomas is

working on the development of policy regarding the signing of WAC checks.

VII. Finance Committee – John Riedl and Thomas Artale

A. Preliminary June Financials

Motion to accept the Preliminary June Financial Statement on the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Joe Eisele

Approved

VIII. DEP Report

John Schwartz reported that Carter Strickland has been appointed the new DEP Commissioner and gave an update of the Ashokan Boy Scout Trek currently underway.

IX. Executive Session

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations.

Motion: Sally Fairbairn

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Joe Eisele

Approved

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.