

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Initiatives

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Minutes of the Watershed Agricultural Council Meeting

October 27, 2009

I. Meeting called to order at 1:05 p.m.

Directors Present:

David Cammer	Fred Huneke
Tom Donnelly	Richard Giles
Sally Fairbairn	Darby Hartwell
William Coleman	Tom Hutson
Barbara Howard	Joe Eisele
Dave Post	John Verhoeven
Ed Blouin, NYC DEP	

Directors Absent:

Linda DeWitt	Ken Smith
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Others Present:

Craig Cashman	Dan Palm
Thomas Artale	Cheryl Marion
Tom Pavlesich	Brian LaTourette
Challey Comer	Seth Hersh
Rick Weidenbach	John Thurgood
Elaine Poulin	Jeff Graff

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2009 WAC meeting.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

Rick Weidenbach and Dan Palm have met and Rick stated he will be sending a letter regarding the audit report.

III. Executive Director Reports – Dan Palm

A. Program Reports/Approvals

1. Subsequent Approval

Motion to approve the subsequent approval request for the Ruth, Jim and Russ Darling – Large Farm – DEP – 005 – WFP2- Revision 8 – August 2009

– BMP# 2e Waste Storage Structure – request for additional funding of \$42,037.00. WFP is over cost guidelines.

Motion: Sally Fairbairn

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

2. Cost Guidelines

A memo from Dave Cammer and Sally Fairbairn to the Board regarding 2010 Large and Small Farm Cost Guidelines Recommendations was presented. As the EoH program has not submitted theirs yet it was decided to wait and vote on the entire package at the January meeting. The Ag Committee and the EoH Committee should be putting in place a process for codifying how cost guidelines are determined each year. After that is completed there would be no need to bring the specific guidelines to the Board each year.

B. PAR – Seth Hersh

Phase III of the PAR contract was due the end of September. PAR had requested a three month extension and WAC had granted it based on the stipulations discussed at last month's meeting. They have added more developmental staff added to the project and, there is a new project manager

Seth has received a request from PAR for a three month extension to complete Phase II of their contract. In exchange they will add 3 additional staff persons to the project. One is presently working at the DEP in Kingston who is familiar with WALIS. A new project manager has been named. The responsibility to write the database has become Seth's and he has put it together in order to get a better product. Seth feels it will go more quickly now. He is hoping to have a working system by the end of December. WAC hasn't received what the milestones will be for Phase III. Again Dan and Seth thanked the DEP for letting one of their employees work with Seth. Presently a lot of time is being invested in the database infrastructure so Seth was not able to guarantee that Phase III would be completed in 6 months.

C. Program Updates

Easements – Jeff advised the Board that the Easement Program staff would be bringing forward about 12 easements between November and March. The present easement contract expires in 2010.

Database – Seth reported 40 candidates have applied for the GIS position. Some are incredibly qualified. Terry Spies, NYC DEP assisted Seth in nine phone interviews. From these they selected four persons from the area to come in for interviews. A candidate has been selected and an offer will be made. We are looking at a December 1st starting date.

Farm to Market – Challey has completed a series of promotions and outreach in September for the Buy Local Month in the Catskills. Farm Catskills partnered with Farm to Market staff to help engage our community in this promotion. Part

of the Buy Local Month included a Buy Local Challenge – a pledge to spend \$10 on local food on a weekly basis. Over 50 community members have taken the pledge.

Agricultural Program – Brian reported that WAP is in the midst of restructuring to better meet the tasks. They will be going back to a re-designed team approach. The CIG report was completed and copies made available. A search is being done for Erin Shea's replacement which is a CCE position.

Forestry Program – Collin has taken a position with an organization in NH. WAC is advertising to fill the position of Wood Products and Utilization Specialist. We hope to have this position filled the first of the year.

Human Resources – Cheryl reported the renovation at the Hamden office is complete now that the lawn has been landscaped and reseeded and the last storage pod has been removed. The parching of the stone basement is done and should prevent any winter freezing of water pipes this year. An air-conditioned room has been created in the Walton office to accommodate the new server and the telephone system. Also an additional office has been created to allow for a more efficient situation for Ag Program staff. There has been some relocation of staff in Walton to house the Database Manager and the GIS person. A storage unit for WAC has also been created on the first floor of the building at 44 West Street. This will allow us to combine everything from three storage facilities. This area is climate controlled. Cheryl and Thomas, as Records Retention Coordinators, are in the process of hiring a company to digitize WAC documents in order to limit the quantity of paper presently stored.

D. Forest Bank Overview

Tom made a presentation on the Forest Bank and a white paper was available to the group.

E. Committee Operating Statements

Dan explained again what is needed for the Committee Operating Statements - a concise statement consisting of 2-3 sentences stating the purpose of the committee. Forget the goals and objectives list WAC has previously used. These will be transformed into guidelines.

F. Endowment Management

The Board needs to determine who will be responsible for working with the Trustee of the endowment. A group needs to be formed no later than next month. Clearly one will be a DEP representative and Dan suggested the Board should consider also appointing 3 WAC Directors and 2 outside managers. WAC needs to identify potential technical experts. This committee would come back to the Council for approval action to be taken on the endowment. Dan stated there are institutions and organizations who better understand criteria which need to be factored in choosing trustees that could help assist. Thomas suggested looking to local hospitals or colleges for persons to serve who already have experience in

endowments. Fred will select Board members to help create this committee and report at the November meeting.

G. Conflict of Interest - Thomas Artale

Thomas and Ken Smith have created a clearer Conflict of Interest form. The document was distributed for Directors to fill in and submit before the close of the meeting. All questions should be addressed to Thomas or Ken.

The DEP Deliverables tool created by Amy Hawk was distributed. This document will have the status column updated each time a Program Manager reports a change to Amy and it will be current on the Board Intranet.

IV. Chair's Report – Fred Huneke

Fred will email/mail his report this month because of the length of the agenda.

Motion to move that the Executive Committee act as the Program Committee for the Data Management Program.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

Data Management Program concerns will be addressed during regularly scheduled Executive Committee meetings.

V. Policy Committee – John Verhoeven

A. Policies – Second Reading

1. Dispute Resolution

Motion to approve for a second reading the Whole Farm Plan Development Approval Policy.

All Whole Farm Plans (WFP) will be developed in accordance with approved WAC policies and Agriculture Committee guidelines. A Whole Farm Plan that is up to \$10,000 but less than 15% over cost guidelines can be approved by the Agriculture Program Manager WOH and the Program Coordinator EOH. All Whole Farm Plans not covered by the above criteria can be approved by the Agriculture Committee WOH and the East of Hudson Committee EOH. Information regarding such approvals will be distributed to Council member 10 days prior to each Council meeting.

Motion: John Verhoeven

Second: Sally Fairbairn

Approved

Motion: In order to facilitate a comprehensive review of WAC policies it is moved that WAC General Policy – Policy Formulation be waived and that recommendations for program policies be brought to the Council by the Chair of the relevant program committee and that general policy recommendations be brought to the Council through the Executive Committee.

Motion: John Verhoeven

Second: Joe Eisele
Approved

V. Governance Committee – Bill Coleman

This committee is developing a slate of Directors which will be sent in the November packets. A couple of additional persons are being contacted to see if they will serve.

VI. Finance Committee – Thomas Artale

Motion to accept the July/August Financial Statement which was combined in order to accommodate end of year adjustments that needed to be made.

Motion: Bill Coleman

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

A presentation of the audit will be made in November.

Motion to accept presented 990 with slight modification being executed and then the document to be submitted.

Motion: Bill Coleman

Second: Dave Post

Approved

Please note in your packet a memo prepared by Thomas on the medium and low impact items mentioned in the Risk Management Report.

VII. NYC DEP Report – Ed Blouin

The DEP is hosting today a group from the Rio de Janeiro Sustainable Rural Development Program, a government agency. This program aims to “enhance small farmers’ productivity and competitiveness through promoting more sustainable production processes. 5 or 6 persons are here for a tour. Tomorrow they will be touring a model forest and viewing streambank management.

VIII. Executive Session

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters:

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Ed Blouin

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Tom Donnelly

Approved

IX. Human Resources

Motion to create the position of Forester II effective January 1, 2010 based on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Motion: Dave Cammer
Second: Bill Coleman
Approved

Motion to accept the recommendation of the Executive Committee to restructure the Agricultural Program to include an Ag Program Manager, a Large Farms Coordinator, a Small Farms Coordinator and a WAP Procurement/contract Officer using the position descriptions distributed today.

Motion: Dave Cammer
Second: Sally Fairbairn
Approved

Motion to approve the Transition Plan for the Executive Director based on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Motion: Tom Hutson
Second: Bill Coleman
Approved

Motion to accept the Work Plan described below to be the basis of the Executive Director's Evaluation by the Executive Committee.

Motion: Sally Fairbairn
Second: Joe Eisele
Approved
Major Work Plan Component

	Benchmarks
Carry out the Transition Plan	As stated in Transition Plan
Personnel	
Complete personnel evaluations	30 July 2010
Complete EOH staffing plan review	31 December 2009
Implement Agr Mgt Team plan	31 January 2010
Fill GIS position	30 Nov 2009
Fill Jr. Cons Planner positions	As per approval letter from DEP
Fill Forestry M/U position	15 Jan 2010
Contracts	
Lead negotiation of easement contract	
Develop contract framework	agreement with DEP by 12/31/09
Develop new deed of conservation easement	contract tech support 11/30/09
Ensure contract deliverables are completed	according to contract oversight tool
Provide oversight over SWCD, NRCS and CCE contracts	ensure deliverables as per contracts
PARS contract	
Phase II	Complete by 31 Dec
2009	
Phase III	Complete by 30 June 2010
DEP VENDEX Evaluation 09 contract	Complete 1 Jan 2010
Leadership	
Facilitate Council implementation of DSA report	
Recommendation #1	Continual as per Plan to Implement Recommendation
Recommendation #2	Adopt by 28 Feb 2010
Recommendation #3	Bring to Council NT 4/30/2010
Financial	
Modification to 09 contract budget	complete by 31 Dec 2009

09	Close out 08R contract	preliminary numbers by 31 Dec
		Closeout 1 Nov 2010
	04 contract review prior to end	30 March 2010
	WAC annual budget revision	31 Dec 2009
	WAC annual budget draft	30 June 2010
	Congressional earmark application	15 Jan 2010
	NYSERDA Grant	Closeout Date to be determined
	Insurance	
	RFP for insurance	15 January 2010
	Select insurance company	15 June 2010
	General	
	Support WAC Board	monthly meeting
	Support WAC committees	meetings
	WAC Capital Plan	Approved plan 30 June 2010
	Auditor review/RFP	Select auditor 1 May 2010
	Endowment	
	RFP for trustee	RFP distributed 30 Feb 2010
	Investment Policy	Policy draft 15 March 2010
	Governance structure	Governing body identified 6/30/10
	Work Plans	
	Drafts from Program Managers	15 May 2010
	Drafts to Council	15 June 2010
	Executive Director Draft plan to Council	15 May 2010

Motion to reduce the salary of the Large Farms Coordinator to one similar to that being received by the Small Farms Coordinator to occur at the time of hiring of the new Agricultural Program Manager.

Motion: Darby Hartwell

Second: Joe Eisele

Opposed: Dave Post and Dave Cammer

Approved

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss contract issues

Motion: Joe Eisele

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

Ed Blouin graciously leaves the meeting. Discussion follows

Motion to come out of Executive Session

Motion: Joe Eisele

Second: John Verhoeven

Approved

Meeting adjourned.