

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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Executive Committee Meeting October 20, 2015

Meeting called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Sally Fairbairn.

Members Present: Dave Cammer Richard Giles
Fred Huneke Sally Fairbairn
John Riedl Ed Blouin

Members Absent: Tom Hutson

Others: Craig Cashman Bud Gladstone
Amy Faulkner

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2015 meeting as presented.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Richard Giles

Approved

II. Executive Director's Report – Craig Cashman

A. Operations Report

- **Property Evaluation:** Property Task force members detailed for the group the results of the recent meeting with DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd, Paul Rush and David Warne regarding the options. As a result of that meeting and subsequent discussions, DEP and WAC will be releasing the following joint statement:

After 20 years of operation, the condition and separation of WAC's West-of-Hudson offices are beginning to limit the pursuit of WAC's mission. WAC's obligations to perpetually steward easements and support DEP's goal of sustaining source water protection are limited by housing West-of-Hudson staff in separate locations. In order to meet these obligations WAC needs to secure appropriate office space to house its West-of-Hudson operations. Over the coming months and years WAC and DEP will work together to site and build a new facility in the NYC watershed for WAC's West-of-Hudson staff. Building a new office will allow WAC to meet the challenges of protecting water quality of the next 20 years and beyond.

The property task force will be recommending that the Council remove from consideration the Treadwell facility and empower the task force to facilitate the process of siting and building a new state of the art facility in the watershed with DEP guidance and funding support. The property task

force, which now includes DEP, will continue to meet regularly and to explore acquiring land and building a facility within the watershed, if the full Council supports that.

- Craig recently spoke to Scott Clark to let him know that the Council will be discussing the Treadwell facility at the meeting next week and will likely vote to not move forward with the purchase.
- During the process of evaluating office space options, WAC hired Lee Marigliano to draft a design of what a new facility might look like for all partner organizations including cost projections. Lee examined both the Hamden and Walton Office, and mentioned via email a few areas of concern with regards to staff safety that he suggested WAC look into. Craig then asked Rick Weidenbach to contact the Walton Code Enforcement Officer and ask that he evaluate the issues Lee found. In a response, the Code Enforcement Officer veered off subject and did not clearly address the safety concerns in question. Craig has since followed up with a formal request from WAC for an inspection of the areas of concern. Although Craig does not feel the safety issues are at a level that we need to immediately relocate our staff; it would be prudent to have a contingency plan in place in the event a move is necessary.

B. Program Report

- WAC and DEP continue to work on the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant funding proposal. Ed Blouin stated that the preproposal has been accepted and that the final proposal will be reviewed in November 2015. If this proposal is accepted, the funds would be awarded sometime in April of 2016. Ed will be requesting a letter of commitment from WAC, as well as partnering organizations if necessary, in support of the funding proposal.

Motion to support the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) proposal as discussed, with a letter from WAC.

Motion: Fred Huneke

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

C. Legal Update

- The legal matter between WAC and Argyle Farms is on the calendar to be presented to the Appellate Court on November 19th.

III. Chair's Report- Sally Fairbairn

A. Advisory Committee Meeting

- Sally reminded everyone of the Advisory Committee Meeting to be held on Thursday, November 12th at the Agroforestry Resource Center in Acra. Michael Chamberlain will be facilitating the discussion.

B. Other

- Fred reported that he will be visiting Yale University students on Monday, as he does annually. Dave Warne, NYC DEP and Pam Young, NYS DoH will be there as well.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.