

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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Minutes of the Watershed Agricultural Council Meeting September 22, 2015

I. Meeting called to order at 6:40 pm.

Directors Present:

Larry Burgin

Jason Coleman

Sally Fairbairn

Wayland Gladstone

Fred Huneke

Patrick Rider

Ken Smith

Tom Hutson

Dave Cammer

Chris DiBenedetto

Richard Giles

Karl Gockel

Steve Reed

John Riedl

John Verhoeven

Ed Blouin, NYC DEP


Richard Giles, Secretary

12/15/15
Date

Directors Absent:

Jennifer Grossman

Others Present:

Craig Cashman

Amy Faulkner

Thomas Artale

Joe Klimek, Toski & Co., CPAs, P.C.

Sally Fairbairn asked for any modifications to the Agenda, none were requested.

II. Approval of August 25, 2015 Minutes

Motion to approve the Minutes of the August 25, 2015 meeting as written.

Motion: Bud Gladstone

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

III. Audit Committee – Ken Smith and Thomas Artale

Ken introduced Joe Klimek of Toski & Co., CPAs, P.C. The fiscal year 15 audit was distributed in the Council packet. Joe reviewed the audit in detail with the Council. He reported that the Council received a clean audit.

Motion to approve the WAC Audit for fiscal year 2014-2015.

Motion: Ken Smith

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

Thomas distributed the organization's 990 to the group; if members had questions they should contact him. The Council thanked Thomas and his staff for the great work that they do.

IV. Executive Director Report - Craig Cashman

A. Program Report

1. **Advisory Committee** – Craig reported that he is currently working with Sally, Fred and Amy to schedule an Advisory Committee Meeting. The Advisory Committee has been utilized since WAC's inception we have utilized the Advisory Committee to gather input and feedback from our partners to provide strategic direction. The meeting will be held on Thursday, November 12th at the Agroforestry Resource Center in Acra. Amy will be mailing out a save the date card this week.

2. **Lawsuit Update** – Craig reported that there is no change in the status of the lawsuit involving Argyle Farms; the case is still scheduled on the Court calendar for November for argument.

B. Operations Report

Treadwell Property Update – The majority of the update for this will be discussed in Executive Session. At this time the staff would like to explore mortgage options with a variety of financial institutions. The motion made at the July meeting to explore mortgage options was specific to the National Bank of Delaware County.

Motion to authorize staff to move forward with a mortgage application through multiple financial institutions for \$1.6 million to be jointly signed by the Executive Director and the Chairman of the Board.

Motion: John Riedl

Second: Bud Gladstone

Approved

V. Chair's Report – Sally Fairbairn

Sally will distribute her September Chair report in Executive Session.

A. **AFT Harvesting Opportunities in New York Conference** – Sally informed every one of the AFT conference and encouraged everyone to attend. She asked those interested to please contact Amy Faulkner and she will get you registered.

B. **East of Hudson Farm Tour** – Sally reminded everyone of the East of Hudson Farm Tour to be held on Monday, September 28th. She encouraged everyone to attend if they could.

C. **Treadwell Property** – Sally reported that she received a letter from Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District Board Chair, Dennis Hill. The letter was copied to all Council Directors as well as the NYC DEP Commissioner regarding WAC's exploration of relocating offices to the Treadwell property. The details of the letter will be discussed in Executive Session, Sally assured everyone that if she were to receive a letter of this type, she would

automatically share it with the rest of the Council, that it wasn't necessary for DC SWCD to copy all Directors.

D. DiBenedetto Pasture Walk – Sally reminded everyone of the DiBenedetto's Pasture Walk to be held September 23 from 1 to 3pm featuring their solar watering system.

VI. Finance Committee – John Riedl

A. Audit – John reported that following additional discussion with the auditors regarding the way that electronic payments are processed, the finance staff has developed/modified the procedure so that all electronic payments are reviewed and signed off by the Treasurer prior to being released. John also stated that starting next month the financials included in the monthly packets will be in a different format, hopefully easier for Directors to read.

B. July Financials

Motion to accept the July Financial Statements based on the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

Motion: John Riedl

Second: Tom Hutson

Approved

VII. Easement Committee – Tom Hutson

The program has protected more than 25,000 acres to date. Brandon Tennis has been named the new Stewardship Coordinator and Michael Federice has joined WAC as the new Stewardship Specialist.

VIII. Agricultural Committee – Bud Gladstone

Dan Gehl has been hired as a fulltime employee as the new Nutrient Management Specialist. Dan was an intern for the Ag Program for two summers. The Ag program has been working on the 2016 workload, with CREP as the highest priority. The Precision Feed Management Administrative Assistant is currently being advertised.

IX. Forestry Committee – Dave Cammer

My Woodlot is on schedule for a fall release, it is currently in the proving stages. Some small changes have been made to the site, namely the re-termining of Forest Management Plan to a Forest Activities Plan. Dave is going to request that Tom P give a presentation to this group at the October meeting.

X. Economic Viability- Richard Giles

The Pure Catskills Marketplace is live, Richard encouraged members to visit the site and explore it, contact Kristin with any comments or questions. There will be a soft launch of the site at the Taste of the Catskills Festival in October. All members are encouraged to attend that festival.

XI. Resource Development

Nothing to report.

XII. NYC DEP Report- Ed Blouin

Ed Blouin reported that 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 and total \$1.2 million dollars over a two year period.

XIII. Executive Session

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss real estate transactions.

Motion: Steve Reed

Second: Dave Cammer

Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session.

Motion: Dave Cammer

Second: Steve Reed

Approved

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.