

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 9, 2004 MEETING

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Kravitz, Kevin Nelson, Mike Sullivan, Jim Opaluch, Everett Stuart, Ken Ayars (representing DEM Director)

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Sutton, Geoff DiCenso, Judy Bailey, Eileen Naughton, Eleanor Sasso

STAFF PRESENT: Ken Ayars, Lis Peterman, Vicky Drew

GUESTS:

The meeting began at 5:15 p.m, at USDA, 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI.

Kevin Nelson made a motion, seconded by Everett Stuart to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2004 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission reviewed and scored applications for development rights:

The Fenner Farm, Charlestown, submitted by the South County Conservancy, was reviewed but not scored, pending the application of the landowner on the application.

The Carpenter Farm, South Kingstown was scored and achieved a total score of 31.84 (primary criteria 24.16, secondary criteria 7.68).

The Smith Farm, Tiverton, was reviewed but not scored, pending the application of both landowners on the application.

Everett Stuart made a motion, seconded by Kevin Nelson, to accept the scores. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission discussed the Manchester Farm, Warren and reviewed a survey submitted by the Town which delineates one acre around the existing barn, and a memo by Lisa Primiano, DEM that the appraisal justifies the purchase price and

Commission funding contribution (\$100,000) for the remaining acreage of the property. Kevin Nelson made a motion, seconded by Tom Kravitz, that the Commission approve the survey and \$100,000 toward Manchester. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission discussed the Escobar Farm, Portsmouth and a letter from the Aquidneck Island Land Trust (AILT) requesting a funding contribution of \$500,000. The AILT is recipient of over \$900,000 in federal farmland protection funds from USDA/NRCS toward the project, and has signed an option agreement with Escobar for the sale of development rights. Kevin Nelson made a motion, seconded by Jim Opaluch, to approve \$500,000 toward Escobar pending review and approval of the appraisal by DEM and the Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission discussed the Green Farm, Smithfield. Bob Sutton met recently with the heirs and attorney, who are in agreement in principle to sell the farm in fee to local dairy farmer Ed Wright, and development rights to the State. The Nature Conservancy will likely contribute funding. Bob Sutton expects to present the project and funding proposal for review of the Commission at the next meeting.

The Commission discussed the Edwards Farm, Richmond. The land is protected through an easement to The Nature Conservancy, and the Commission previously approved the acquisition of development rights from the Conservancy to 47 acres for \$60,000. Tom Kravitz made a motion, seconded by Everett Stuart, to authorize the Chair to sign the agreement and assignment for Edwards. The motion passed unanimously.

The 2004 Open Space, Recreation, Bay and Watershed Protection Bond (Question 8) was discussed, which will provide additional funding toward farmland development rights and open space acquisitions. Kevin Nelson made a motion, seconded by Everett Stuart, to express the Commission's strong support toward the Bond and passage. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission reviewed correspondence between Director Fred Vincent, DEM and John O'Brien, Chief, Statewide Planning Program, DOA reflecting differing perspectives on the draft rules and consistency with Community Comprehensive Plans. It is the general view of the Commission that the draft rules should not require proposed development rights acquisitions as a pre-condition be consistent with comprehensive plans.

The Commission adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Kenneth D. Ayars, Chief
Division of Agriculture, RIDEM