

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 8, 2007 MEETING

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Everett Stuart, Kevin Nelson, Dave Wallace, George Mason, Ken Ayars

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Jason Pezzullo, Jim Opaluch

GUESTS:

STAFF: Lis Peterman, DEM
Reena Shaw, USDA/NRCS
Mike Moorman, USDA/NRCS

The meeting began at 5:10 pm, at USDA, 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI.

Dave Wallace made a motion, seconded by Kevin Nelson, to approve the minutes of the February 15, 2007 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Reena Shaw, USDA/NRCS introduced Mike Moorman who was recently hired on a permanent basis to handle the FRPP and several other NRCS programs for the Rhode Island NRCS office. Reena had been serving as acting FRPP program manager and will therefore no longer. The Commission welcomed Mike and asked that the minutes reflect their acknowledgment and thank you to Reena Shaw for her service to the Commission over the past several months.

The Commission discussed farms in negotiation.

Regarding Schartner Farm – The Commission let expire the increase in commitment from \$500,000 to \$800,000, which was for a 60 day period. The Commission's commitment therefore stands at \$500,000, though the \$300,000 removed from the project was not reallocated to any other project.

Regarding Peckham Farm – The Commission discussed the proposal to subdivide the property into 3 smaller parcels in relation to potentially requiring a revision to the

Covenant that the individual parcels always be actively farmed. It was agreed that the Covenant be revised to reflect this requirement for Peckham.

The Commission discussed the 2006 Separation of Powers Legislation regarding the Commission with the goal being to add to the number of members eligible to vote. The Commission also discussed membership in general and vacancies. Everett Stuart reported he had received a letter from the Governor re-appointing him to the Commission. Ken Ayars reported he had been contacted by William Wright who had received a letter from the Governor appointing him to the Commission. Both appointments are subject to confirmation by the Senate. Everett Stuart also brought up discussion on the Separation of Powers training program required to be offered by the Department of Administration pursuant to the 2006 Legislation. Kevin Nelson will look into it in relation to being made available to the Commission.

The Commission discussed the status of proposed rule amendments, and agreed to publish notice in the Providence Journal that a public hearing be held prior to the Commission meeting in April.

Kevin Nelson brought up the issue of hiring additional administrative staff to assist DEM with the purchase of development rights program, particularly in relation to clerical and administrative duties. Ken Ayars agreed to the value of so doing, and there was discussion as to whether such can be done with bond funds.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth D. Ayars, Chief
Division of Agriculture, RIDEM