



**AGRICULTURAL LANDS PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 6, 2008 MEETING**

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

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Opaluch, Jason Pezzullo

STAFF: Lis Peterman, DEM
Mike Moorman, USDA

The meeting was called to order at 5:10 pm at USDA, 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick.

George Mason made a motion, seconded by Will Wright to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2007 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Kevin Nelson made a motion, seconded by Will Wright to approve the minutes of the November 29, 2007 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

George Mason made a motion, seconded by Kevin Nelson to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2007 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Ken Ayars and Commission members provided updates and discussed farms in negotiation:

Schartner – still in negotiation, most recent offer letter discussed.

Smith, Glocester – survey complete, subordination agreement being reached with lender than project should close.

Tuckahoe Turf, Richmond – survey being completed, undergoing title of which there are some issues that require resolution concerning old railway easements on the property.

Peckham, Tiverton – in discussion with Town, USDA, DEM regarding subdivision of property and then to undergo final survey.

DelVecchio, N. Kingstown – final environmental assessment and clean up completed, to close shortly.

Freeborn, N. Kingstown – still in negotiation concerning placement of additional house on property.

George Mason provided updates regarding the proposed amendments by the General Assembly to the Separation of Powers legislation regarding the Commission, which would effect membership and appraisal requirements. The bill has been introduced by Senator Sosnowski and Representative DeSimone and discussed in Committee.

The Commission discussed the proposed 2008 Open Space/Farmland Bond of which there is debate within the General Assembly as to whether to include in the budget and at what amount. The Governor proposes a bond in the amount of \$5 million, and land conservation advocates would like to see it increased to \$15 million. The House Finance Committee appears reluctant to have a bond at any amount. Farmland bond funds are essentially all allocated to projects from the 2004 bond and without a new bond issue the state program will grind to a stop within the next year.

The Commission reviewed and scored farms under the new scoring system:

Gardner, Charlestown achieved a score of 24.0.

Sandford, Tiverton achieved a score of 38.8

Deslisle, Portsmouth achieved a score of 35.8

Sandford and Deslisle are therefore accepted into the program having achieved a score of at least 35 points or half of the possible total of 70.

The Commission further discussed bills within the 2008 General Assembly including Senate 2213 which revises the separation of powers bill effecting Commission membership and appraisal requirements. Dave Wallace made a motion, seconded by Will Wright to endorse S 2213. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission discussed S 2269 that places requirements on state agencies that seek to construct on prime farmland. Dave Wallace made a motion seconded by George Mason to endorse S 2269. The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission discussed the fiscal year annual report required by separation of powers legislation and George Mason agreed to assist with preparation. Dave Wallace made a motion, seconded by Will Wright to authorize the Chair to sign the fiscal 07 annual report and submit to the General Assembly etc. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenneth D. Ayars, Chief
Division of Agriculture, DEM