



**AGRICULTURAL LANDS PRESERVATION COMMISSION (ALPC)**  
**MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 18, 2014 MEETING**

**DRAFT**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ken Ayars, Kevin Nelson, Martha Neale, Jon Reiner, Fay Strongin, Everett Stuart,

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:** George Mason, David Wallace, Will Wright

**STAFF:** Lauren Farley – DEM, Mike Kenyon – USDA / NRCS, Michelle Sheehan - DEM

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 pm at USDA, 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick, RI by K. Nelson, Vice Chair.

On a motion by E. Stuart and a second by M. Neale, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the September 17, 2014 meeting with minor amendments.

**ALPC Budget**

M. Sheehan gave an update on the ALPC budget. The current balance with the Fiscal Year 2015 bond apportionment (\$1.5 million) and current project and overhead commitments included is \$963,500. Another \$1.5 million apportionment is due July 1, 2015. Current project commitments are \$150,000 to Rippin in N. Kingstown, \$127,500 to Lial in Warren, \$249,000 to Bettencourt in Tiverton, \$550,000 to Bailey, \$185,000 to Regnier/Fletcher Road, and \$200,000 to Whaley Farm in South Kingstown. Current overhead commitments (appraisals and survey) total \$95,000.

**Status of Farms in Negotiation**

M. Sheehan provided a brief summary of current active projects.

Bettencourt- due to onsite issues and NRCS closing requirements, this project is in jeopardy of closing, unless we forfeit NRCS funding. On a motion by E. Stuart and a second by J. Reiner, the Commission voted unanimously to approve staff to offer an additional \$257,500 to the project to cover NRCS funds.

Lial – to close 12/22/14

Two appraisals have been ordered:  
Hibbad in Tiverton is being reappraised

Polisena in Cranston is being reappraised  
Ferguson/Broadwall in Coventry will be appraised as soon as the landowner decides which land to keep out of the project.

Rippin and Regnier are both being led by the Town of North Kingstown and are proceeding towards closings.

### **Scoring**

Chuck Allott of the Aquidneck Land Trust gave a brief presentation about a project, St. Marys, for which he is seeking ALPC funding. The Aquidneck Land Trust had been scheduled to close on the project at the end of the year, but due to appraisal issues they must extend their deadline and forfeit NRCS funding, for which they now have a project shortfall. The land trust requests that ALPC contribute \$200,000 towards the project, if scored in the program.

St. Marys in Portsmouth was scored by the Commission and achieved an average score of 49.3 The minimum score for acceptance into the program is 35, on a motion by E. Stuart and a second by K. Ayars, the Commission voted unanimously to accept St. Marys into the program.

On a motion by J. Reiner and a second by M. Neale, the Commission voted unanimously to contribute \$200,000 to the St. Marys project.

### **Farmland Bond**

K. Ayars informed the Commission that DEM will be developing the procedure and regulations for the new farmland bond funds to be used for farmland acquisition in the upcoming months. The process will be transparent and the Commission, along with other members of the farming community in RI, are welcome to join the effort.

### **NRCS Easement Monitoring update**

M. Sheehan informed the Commission that DEM staff and its partners have made significant progress towards full compliance regarding retroactive monitoring for NRCS projects. All but three projects are completed and full compliance is expected by April of 2015. The current structure and capabilities of the conservation districts were discussed. Staff is still discussing with State Conservation Committee the capacity to monitor future projects.

### **Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program**

M. Kenyon provided a brief update of the program, now called Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). NRCS is encouraging applicants to apply for the program, though a deadline has not been set, pending the publication of the new rules. The National Office will look at the number of pending applications in each state in deciding how much funding to allocate.

### **100<sup>th</sup> Protected Farm celebration planning**

M. Sheehan informed the Commission that DEM is planning the 100<sup>th</sup> Protected Farm press event. An Commissioners interested in participating are more than welcome.

**Announcements/Additional Business**

E. Stuart suggested that Janet Coit, Director of DEM, be invited to an ALPC meeting in 2015.

There being no further business, on a motion by M. Neale and a second by E. Stuart, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Sheehan  
Division of Planning and Development  
RIDEM