



**AGRICULTURAL LANDS PRESERVATION COMMISSION (ALPC)
MINUTES OF THE MAY 28, 2015 MEETING**

FINAL

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

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: George Mason, Will Wright, Dave Wallace, Ken Ayars

STAFF: Lauren Farley – DEM, Mike Kenyon – USDA / NRCS

GUESTS: South Kingstown Land Trust members Clark Collins and Martha Day, Weeden Farm Family Representative Austin Smith, Southside Community Land Trust Farm, Food and Youth Programs Director Laura Bozzi

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 J. Reiner and a second by E. Stuart, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the March 26, 2015 meeting

ALPC Budget

L. Farley gave an update on the ALPC budget. The current balance is \$5,127,500 and includes: Fiscal Year 2015 bond apportionment (\$1.5 million), current project and overhead commitments (\$1,085,000) and \$3 million apportionment due July 1, 2015. Current project commitments are \$150,000 to Rippin in N. Kingstown, \$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 \$85,000.

South Kingstown Land Trust/Weeden Farm (Matunuck Schoolhouse Road, South Kingstown): request to swap land under ALPC Development Rights for abutting land owned by the Union Fire District.

C. Collins gave Commission overview of organization and their proposal. SKLT protects more than 2,600 acres of open space and has ten parcels in active agriculture, including 97-acre Weeden Farm. The Union Fire District of South Kingstown approached SKLT regarding a land swap of their abutting properties on Matunuck Schoolhouse Road. The plan proposes to transfer .52 acres to the Union Fire District for the construction of new facilities; more than half of this land is unsuitable for crop production. The 4,740 +/- sf of farmland to be sacrificed would be compensated for by the receipt of 16,450 +/- sf of

cropland to the north of existing firehouse. Following construction of a new firehouse SKLT would take ownership of old firehouse to use as storage space for agricultural and land management purposes. C. Collins acknowledged the critical concerns regarding amending the conservation restrictions. He asserted that the swap furthers the overall purpose expressed in the conservation restriction; is within the by-laws of SKLT; the land received in swap is in the same or better than land removed from restriction; the financial value of land swapped is equal to or exceeds released land and there is no private inurement involved in the transaction. F. Strongin asked about adjacent land use. M. Day responded it is leased cropland. The subject property is not suitable for agricultural use. The lessee farmer would gladly expand into new viable area. M. Neale asked A. Smith about how the family, original owner of the farm feels. A. Smith responded they are strongly supportive and have a very long history of supporting civic endeavors in town.

On a motion by E. Stuart and a second by J. Reiner, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the proposal of SKLT subject to positive review by DEM legal and RI Attorney General.

Southside Community Land Trust: presentation about helping farmers in their network move onto their own land

L. Bozzi of Southside Community Land Trust provided Commission with overview of their activities. SCLT is based in Providence and has a network of community gardens and operates DEM-owned Urban Edge Farm in Cranston. They look to provide pathways for new farmer training, gaining experience and access to land, moving from small urban plots, to UEF and finally on to new farms. They would like to open up another field to new farmers at UEF and more broadly to support beginning farmers through training, apprenticeships, and land access through a more formalized program. Commission members commended SCLT and acknowledged challenges that come with linking new farmers to land.

Status update of farms in negotiation:

Cesario: 111 Pond House Road, North Smithfield – Appraisal received May 28, 2015 for \$130K. Not yet reviewed by DEM

Rippin: 100 Lafayette Road, North Kingstown – Revised appraisal and DDR being reviewed by NRCS

Hibbad: 273 Puncatest Neck Road, Tiverton – L. Farley requested from Commission a commitment of funding in order to proceed with project. It was noted by Commission that farm was accepted to program in 2005 under the previous scoring system. Commission asked before they consider a commitment of funds that the Hibbad application be updated and potentially rescored under the new system. K. Nelson cited rule 8.4 “Periodic Updates” in the ALPC Rules and Regulations.

Dimeo: 396 Greenville Avenue, Johnston – Will be appraised when owner decides what acreage of parcel to include

Scoring new applications:

Adams Farm: Hog Hill Road, Exeter - The farm was scored by the commission and achieved an average score of 41.4

Buxton Hollow Farm, 300 Buxton Street, North Smithfield - The farm was scored by the commission and achieved an average score of 31

Gorham farm, 189 Plainfield Pike, Foster - The farm was scored by the commission and achieved an average score of 24

Gordon Farm, 1090 Liberty Lane, South Kingstown - The farm was scored by the commission and achieved an average score of 44.8

Farmland Bond/Acquisition Program: update on creation of rules and regulations

L. Farley updated Commission on the development of rules and regulations. Following a review of the existing statutory language of the Farmland Preservation Act minor changes will need to be implemented to ensure all bond funds administered by this program are dedicated for farmland preservation purposes. DEM staff is working to find a bill to attach changes to in legislature.

Update on potential amendments to the Deed to Development Rights: Subdivision clause and affirmative covenant for active agriculture

L. Farley informed Commission that DEM staff are planning to meet with Attorney General's Office regarding these provisions.

NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program: Update on application deadline and new rules

M. Kenyon informed Commission 5 parcels were submitted to ACEP-ALE program. They are in the process of scoring them, conducting site visits.

There being no further business, on a motion by D. Wallace and a second by E. Stuart, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:00

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Farley, Division of Planning and Development, RIDEM