



COLTS NECK FARMLAND PRESERVATION  
AND OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Farmland and Open Space Committee

9/12/11

Meeting Minutes

Attended by: Chairperson Richard Malinowski, Liaison Ed Eastman, Brian Grant, John Jacoby, Virginia Mumford, Thomas Orgo, and Richard Rehm

Absent: Patrick Gilmore, Thomas Morin (excused) and Pat Polgar (excused)

Mr. Morin called the meeting to order at 7:30PM. On a motion by Mr. Orgo, and seconded by Mr. Rehm, the minutes of the June 20, 2011 meeting were approved.

### **Old Business**

Mr. Malinowski distributed copies of a letter to the editor opposing the referendum, to be sent to the Asbury Park Press, the Colts Neck Calendar, the Colts Neck Community Magazine, the Colts Neck Journal, the Monmouth Journal, and the News Transcript. A copy is attached to the minutes. The Journal requires that letters contain less than 200 words. Mr. Grant offered to write an article opposing the referendum from a purely financial point of view. Mr. Orgo suggested that the letter be put on the web site.

There is concern that, if a farm becomes available for preservation, the funds would not be available for purchasing the development rights. Further, a loss of up to 20% of dedicated taxes would lengthen debt service and raise the amounts paid on old bonds. Mr. Malinowski and Mr. Orgo agreed that the Smith property should be sold, because even at a loss this sale could significantly lower debt service payments, and the sale would return the property to the tax rolls. Mr. Orgo will do an analysis.

Mr. Malinowski remarked that there are ten members of this committee, and 500 members of the Sports Foundation. Mr. Eastman suggested that members of this committee meet with the Sports Foundation and with the Recreation Commission, of which Mr. Rehm is a member, to educate people about the financial benefits to the taxpayers of farmland preservation, and assist them in finding ways to help support maintenance of sports and recreation fields, as well as their programs.

Mr. Rehm offered to arrange a meeting with Thom Hennessy of the Recreation Department. Mr. Malinowski will attend the meeting and coordinate with Mr. Grant, Mr. Jacoby and Mr. Morin.

Mr. Grant distributed copies of a list of deed-restricted lands in the Township. He and Mr. Morin will obtain the phone numbers of those farms that are lacking Preserved signage, in order to contact them to determine if they would like signs erected on their properties.

### **New Business**

A motion was made by Mr. Rehm, and seconded by Mr. Orgo, that any committee member with three or more unexcused absences will no longer serve on the committee. In order to fulfill the committee's mission, active members are needed.

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**Liaison Report**

Mr. Malinowski questioned the reason for rolling over earmarked Farmland Preservation funds at 0.25%. Mr. Eastman said that the decision was that of the Bond Council, of which John Antonides and John Bennett are members. Mr. Malinowski will request a meeting with John Antonides.

On a motion by Mr. Orgo, and seconded by Mr. Rehm, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM. Next meeting will be on Monday, November 14, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Terry  
Secretary

**Colts Neck Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee in  
response to the proposed November referendum to divert 15% of  
funds to the Recreation Committee**

*Letter to the Editor of the Colts Neck Calendar*

August 27, 2011

Dear Editor,

The Colts Neck Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee is comprised of Colts Neck residents who have been appointed by the Township Committee with the primary goal of preserving farmland and open space in the township to insure the continuation of farming, and to promote and maintain the rural character and quality of life which has become the trade mark of Colts Neck. The funding for this program has typically been shared by the township (16%), the county (24%) and the state (60%), hence the township has considerable leverage when preservation opportunities are presented and we need to have available funds to capitalize on those opportunities.

Colts Neck residents have voted to approve a special 2% tax to support the farmland and open space preservation program which has allowed Colts Neck to preserve close to 900 acres of farmland and open space. This represents about 1/3 of the potential farmland and open space currently available in Colts Neck. Hence funds (if this program is to succeed) must continue to be available to support the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program.

**While the primary goal of this program is to preserve farmland and open space in Colts Neck, which is important to the future of Agriculture in our Garden State, the program has provided a substantial financial benefit to the taxpayers of Colts Neck by eliminating the annual expenses of the Township that are associated with additional housing units that the program prevents from being developed. Based on a present net value study conducted by the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee looking 15 years into the future from the year 2010, the development rights that have been purchased by the program to date will save the residents of Colts Neck a minimum of \$15 million dollars thereby preventing escalating tax increases.**

The Colts Neck Township Committee has taken action to put a Question before the Colts Neck voters in November asking if the residents support diverting up to 15% of the Farmland and Open Space Preservation funds collected each year for maintenance of ball fields, dredging townships ponds, repairing gazebos etc. The Colts Neck Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee unanimously oppose diverting any funds from this important program. **These funds are required to pay our debt service on the current program and, as noted above, to maintain**

**the township's ability to capitalize on future preservation opportunities.** A diversion of 15% of the Farmland Preservation funds will severely diminish the ability of the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee to save future parcels of land without relying on additional loans. We strongly suggest our Township Committee to look into other resource alternatives for ball field maintenance and the above mentioned operational costs. **Once land is lost to development, it is lost forever and the character and quality of life in Colts Neck is diminished.**

**The proposed diversion of funds, although well intentioned, from Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee to the Recreational Committee without a viable Recreation Committee plan and budget for how these funds will be utilized should not be considered. Additionally, converting the Farmland's short term debt (1% interest over 6 years) to long term debt (4.5% 10 year debt) will only continue to mortgage our future into an additional \$175,000-\$200,000 in additional debt service to cover operational expenses. We feel each Colts Neck program should stand on its own merits with its own budget and plan. Colts Neck should preserve its borrowing power for critical future issues and preserve farmland and open space for our future generations and not move monies from one account to another.**

**We kindly ask our neighbors, our friends, and the residents of Colts Neck to vote NO on this important issue.**

Sincerely,

Richard Malinowski  
Committee Chairman Farmland and Open Space Preservation Committee