



COLTS NECK FARMLAND PRESERVATION
AND OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Farmland and Open Space Committee

1/30/12

Meeting Minutes

Attended by: Liaison Thomas Orgo, Brian Grant, John Jacoby, Thomas Morin, Richard Rehm, Adele Sessa, Jim Stuart and Al Yodakis

Absent: Virginia Mumford and Pat Polgar (both excused)

Mr. Morin called the meeting to order at 7:30PM. After the pledge of allegiance and roll call, Mr. Orgo nominated Mr. Stuart as Chair. The motion was seconded by Mr. Yodakis. All present were in favor. Mr. Morin nominated Mr. Grant as Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rehm. All present were in favor. Mr. Stuart took the chair for the rest of the meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Jacoby, and seconded by Mr. Rehm, the minutes of the October 25, 2011 meeting were approved.

Old Business

Mr. Stuart called for reports on activities of the past year. Mr. Morin reported that he and Mr. Grant took inventory of which preserved farms have official signs, and determined that only some of them have the signs. They plan to survey the property owners without signs to determine who would like to have signs.

Mr. Stuart asked if there has been a recent letter-writing campaign, to enlist more property owners in the preservation program. Mr. Morin responded that the committee has chosen to first examine indebtedness and the costs thereto. Mr. Orgo stated that there currently is over \$300,000.00 in dedicated taxes annually, but that the bond payments increase each year, the largest balloon payment being due in 2014. Mr. Orgo stated that there are sufficient funds to preserve the Cicalese farm. Mr. Stuart called for a comprehensive report on cash flow.

Mr. Orgo suggested that selling the Smith farm for \$1.8 million might create a loss of \$0.5 million, but that would be far less than the property is presently costing the Township in interest payments plus loss of tax revenue. Mr. Stuart requested that Mr. Orgo investigate this possibility and return to the committee with a presentation of data.

Mr. Jacoby asked if the SADC might be willing to reconsider putting a lot on the 27-acre parcel on Five Point Road behind the high school. Mr. Stuart doubted that they would. Mr. Jacoby questioned why the Township should own it. Mr. Orgo stated that a cell tower will be built there.

New Business

Mr. Stuart declared that the approach to the target list should be reinvented. Mr. Yodakis agreed to draft a letter to potential candidates for preservation. Harriet Honigfeld at MCADB will be asked to furnish the current list, and the committee can work from that. Mr. Orgo explained that programs at different levels of government have differing rules of eligibility. The most popular program has been the Planning Incentive Grant, whereby the State contributes the largest amount, the County a lesser amount, and the Township the remainder. He remarked that the MCADB will not take applicants who are not on the target list. He suggested that inquiring property owners be referred to Tim Anfusio in the Planning Office, or to Harriet Honigfeld if they are not on the target list.

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Mrs. Sessa, having been through the farmland preservation application process, will write a report on the application process. She and Mr. Rehm will collaborate on writing advertising for the program. Advertising rates for local publications will be determined.

Mr. Stuart led a discussion of the committee budget, and potential requirements thereto, including advertising, mailing of newsletter to targeted property owners, and installation of preserved farmland signs.

Mr. Stuart encouraged committee members to read the State Strategic Plan, which is the State's master plan, especially noting that preservation is inadequately addressed therein.

Liaison Report

Mr. Jacoby reported that there was no meeting of the MCADB last month.

On a motion by Mr. Jacoby, and seconded by Mr. Yodakis, the meeting was adjourned at 8:41 PM. Next meeting will be on Monday, March 12, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Terry
Secretary