

TOWN OF GORHAM
CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2007

The Town of Gorham Conservation Board met on Tuesday, April 4, 2007 at 7:00 PM at the Gorham Town Hall. Present were, Chairman Steve Horrocks, Andrew Hoover, Bob Brancato, John Foust, John Frank, Bill Johnson, Gene Hermet, Fred Lightfoote and Secretary Nancy Hollenbeck.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on March 20, 2007 were reviewed. The following changes made: Paragraph B shall read as follows: The Board shall review applications for rezoning, major subdivisions, special use permits, variance requests in agricultural zoned districts or adjacent to agricultural land received by the Town Board, Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals or the use or development of any open area identified in the Open Space Index. These applications would be of limited land disturbance or other activity that:

1. is located on a parent lot or lots that contain five or more acres of land; or
2. would create five or more building lots; or
3. is a Type I action under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act; or
4. Categories outlined in the Open Space Index:
a through e are the same as previously written.
Mission Statement on page 2, replace 'is created' with 'will'.

On the motion from Mr. Brancato, seconded by Mr. Hoover, the minutes were accepted as changed above. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hermet met with Maria Rudzinski, she was very pleased with what the Board has done with the map. The lists should also have been color coded. Maria will work on the map and get copies for everyone when complete. Mr. Hermet will contact her and find out the next steps and will ask if Maria would like to attend our next meeting.

Briefly discussed the procedure for purchasing items and what items may be needed to be able to educate the public which is a task that this Board will be working on in the future. This Board should come up with a plan and proposal to be referred to the Town Board for approval.

Mr. Frank stated that we should look into and work on purchasing development rights for land that is along public (municipal) water lines that is in the country. That is the area that typically seems to get built up the quickest. This was briefly discussed. Suggested that we look at one lot deep on farmland where there is public water access. Not trying to buy the development rights to the land behind because that isn't the major problem in most of the agricultural land. We don't see people wanting to put large developments out there. Wherever there is water we see people, historically Middle Road is one of the best examples. Wherever they have extended water, we get more

houses. Somewhat on Lake to Lake Road also. If you want to protect the agricultural lands that would be one way to do it is try to get those people to sell the development rights to the lots along the road, thereby preserving the viability of the farm land. Strip development is what is affecting the agricultural land. Development of an entire farm parcel is not the issue at this point. This was discussed further.

At this time we have no procedures for purchasing development rights, but we need to come up with the parcels we want to work on and work through the procedures which involve applying for grants, etc.

Determining the value of a lot with public water would be fairly easy because there are so many of them to use as comparisons.

Everyone seemed to agree that the single lots along the road frontage are a large threat to farmland. This seems like a good project to pursue.

Mr. Johnson stated that the NYSACC, New York State Association of Conservation Councils has a lot of information pertinent to our Board. He will check into membership which may provide newsletters, etc. They do have a website that is a wealth of information. There are also many other resources available on line.

Briefly talked about other areas around the State that have done a good job of preserving land, setting it aside. Many areas started years ago when land cost less.

Before this Board can apply for grants, there are other items that need to be completed. Maria Rudzinski alluded to these other tasks at a previous meeting and will help guide the Board through them. It was suggested that the minutes from this Board be sent to Maria so that she will be aware of what we are thinking about.

The Federal Land Preservation program was also talked about.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, May 1st, 2007 at 7:00 PM. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 PM

Nancy Hollenbeck
Secretary