

TOWN OF GORHAM
CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES
June 2, 2009

The Town of Gorham Conservation Board met on Tuesday, June 2, 2009 at 7:00 PM at the Gorham Town Hall. Present were, Andrew Hoover, Bob Brancato, John Foust, John Frank, Bill Johnson, Gene Hermenet, Steve Horrocks, Fred Lightfoote, Ken Smith and Nancy Hollenbeck.

The minutes of the May 5, 2009 meeting were approved by a motion from John Frank, seconded by Bob Brancato. Motion carried.

Ken Smith from the New York Agricultural Land Trust was present and spoke about farm land protection. This organization was formed two years ago specifically to provide farmers and farm owners with the opportunity to get conservation easements on their property if they wanted. Basically these are easements that farmers can sell from their property so that they can get some of the development value in the present without actually having to sell the farm. It puts a substantial amount of cash in their hands to help with equipment, etc. The process to obtain an easement can take as long as two and half years. A property survey, appraisal based upon the conservation easement and land planning, title search, NYALT technical assistance, baseline documentation, filing fees and municipal support, stewardship fee, stewardship fund, etc. are all necessary as part of the application process. When complete, the land will be protected for at least the next several generations and will only be used for farming. Farms must have prime soils to be considered for the program. The Town and/or County must also be supportive of the project.

Talked about other farms in the area that have been or in the process of obtaining conservation easements and how to start the process. It can start with the farmer, town, county, etc., but all have to work together.

It was suggested that a meeting be held to inform and educate landowners about the options available with regard to conservation easements.

Mr. Brancato asked if we should approach the Town Board and ask for \$25,000 to hire a grant writer and get ready to submit an application. This was briefly discussed.

Mr. Lightfoote will talk to Supervisor Calabrese.

Mr. Frank will contact Judy Wright from Auburn, for further information.

Talked about having a list of properties that we feel should be preserved. Thendara, Pelican Point, LeTourneau and the parcel at Route 364 and County Road #1 should be on the list. Should work on a list of the high impact parcels.

Mr. Foust will contact Bruce Gilman. If he needs to meet with us it could be scheduled for July 7th.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 PM

Nancy Hollenbeck
Secretary