

TOWN OF GORHAM
CONSERVATION BOARD
MINUTES
DECEMBER 8, 2009

The Town of Gorham Conservation Board met on Tuesday, December 8, 2009 at 7:00 PM at the Gorham Town Hall. Present were, Andrew Hoover, Bob Brancato, John Foust, Bill Johnson, Steve Horrocks, and Nancy Hollenbeck.

The minutes of the October 6, 2009 meeting were approved by a motion from Mr. Hoover, seconded by Mr. Johnson.

The owner of the former Thendara property, Mr. Pellicano, is planning to request a change in the zoning from Commercial to Residential. He would like to live in the former restaurant. The Planning Board has requested a recommendation from the Conservation Board. Talked about the potential loss of public access to the lake and view from the site if it is rezoned residential. If the property is rezoned to Residential: any future subdivision could have negative impacts on the site and lake; removal of the asphalt parking area, etc. would improve runoff; removal of some of the docks would decrease use at the shore; the proposed landscaping would be aesthetically beneficial. Talked about Mr. Atkins' recommendation concerning a conservation easement on the property. This Board would be very supportive of such an effort and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with the Pellicano's. Also briefly talked about scoring/rating the property. The higher the parcel scores, the higher priority it is for protection. Mr. Foust will draft a recommendation to the Town Board and Planning Board.

John Foust attended an educational seminar, Protection Agricultural Land in the Finger Lakes. The session was very heavily attended, standing room only. There was representation from elected officials, appointed board members and property owners. The second presentation talked about protecting ag lands. Three farmers, one from Penn Yan, two from the Buffalo area, had obtained conservation easements on their property and talked about the benefits and the process. It is a very long, sometimes frustrating process. John made copies of the handouts for everyone's information.

Talked about ways to inform property owners of the options for protecting land, maybe we could host a meeting and have representatives from the Finger Lakes Land Trust and other similar agencies. It might be appropriate to open the meeting to neighboring areas. Mr. Brancato will contact Peter Landry to talk about a possible meeting.

Talked about tax benefits to putting property into a conservation easement. Suggested that it may be appropriate to have Dirk Davey the Town Assessor attend a meeting.

The Town of Gorham Farmland, Open Space and Resource Conservation Plan was briefly reviewed and discussed. It contains an outline of our purpose. We should be working to establish a program to purchase and/or accept donations of development rights or conservation easements. After a brief discussion, all agreed to have John Foust meet with Supervisor Calabrese to discuss duties and actions of this Board as outlined in the Farmland, Open Space and Resource Conservation Plan.

Nancy Hollenbeck
Secretary