

Dryden Conservation Board

April 24, 2018

Members Present: Peter Davies (chair), Steve Bissen, Bob Beck, Timothy Woods, Jeanne Grace, Craig Schutt, Gian Dodici, Mike Richmond, and (at 8:35) Nancy Munkenbeck

Liaisons: Kathrin Servoss (Town Board)

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

Review and approval of minutes dated January 30, 2018 and February 27, 2018.

In the January minutes two names were misspelled and the wording needed to be changed in one sentence. In the February minutes an incorrect word was transcribed from the tape; should have been impetus, and a first name was incorrectly noted.

C. Schutt made a motion to approve the January and February minutes as corrected and B. Beck seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Citizens' Privilege:

No one in attendance

Additions to the agenda:

Reports received:

1. Agriculture Report
2. EMC Report

P. Davies stated that he was intrigued by the claim in the EMC Report that there was a possible connection between the use of Roundup (glyphosate) and Algal Blooms. After researching it he was unable to find any scientific evidence supporting this claim. He said it turns out that it's not the phosphorus in the glyphosate, but rather the glyphosate causes the release from soils. He is going to do additional research on this and e-mail the scientist/Professor of Chemistry and find out exactly what he has uncovered. M. Richmond said that years ago they had a major research effort aimed at that (glyphosate) when purple loosestrife began to show up everywhere. They looked into how to control this with herbicides, and in looking into it, they found it was very effective at killing things and the only herbicide safe to use around/in water. There was at that time an argument about whether glyphosate deposited phosphorus. P. Davies asked if it deposits or releases phosphorus. M. Richmond said either one; they'd tried to find out what might be wrong with glyphosate and using it around water. He said they were never able to learn anything from the

company or from literature available on the use of glyphosate.

M. Richmond asked if anyone attended the Rebecca Schneider presentation on Ditch Management. Many had attended; they felt that was a very serious issue she discussed. With current practices of spreading cow manure on the fields, then when it rains it leaches into the drainage system, then into the streams and then into the lake. Years ago, after spreading manure they used to till the land soon after spreading, but that's no longer the case with today's large farms. *C. Schutt said that large farms have to have a permit and are highly regulated; they have to till the soil within forty-eight hours of spreading manure. Ditch management is very important not only to help prevent flooding and erosion, but also helps to keep our water supply free of pollution. M. Richmond stated that if our county was a human, it would be on dialysis because we're not properly disposing our waste.

*This information was noted by C. Schutt as a qualification to what was noted in these minutes at the May 29, 2018 meeting.

New Business:

1. P. Davies reported that the Town Board supported the conservation easement on the Prince Farm, aka the Brotherton Farm. Additionally, the Town Board came up with the \$10,000.00 to help facilitate the establishment and stewardship of this easement.

2. P. Davies reported that the Town Board requested that the Conservation Board in conjunction with the Agriculture Committee consider passing a resolution for a special fund to be set up for establishing a conservation easement fund for future conservation easements that may come up. The Town Board said they don't know where to get this money; there should be a special fund for it. He had prepared a draft resolution for everyone to look over. K. Servoss said that what the Town Board requested was that the Conservation Board and the Agriculture Committee come up with a fund and a way to get money in the fund, and a plan to use the money. They discussed the issue of how to get money for this. P. Davies suggested doing this in two steps; first getting the Agriculture Advisory Committee on board with the resolution to establish a fund to be used for facilitating conservation easements. He asked C. Schutt to take the resolution to the Ag Committee for their input. The next step would be to research how to get the funding. K. Servoss suggested doing some research on the different types of funds that can be created and recommend in the resolution the type of fund to be created because there is the reserve fund, the capital planning fund, and other different types of funds. She also suggested a change in the last line of the draft resolution P. Davies prepared. The last line reads "easements on land deemed desirable for preservation within the Town of Dryden" and she suggested inserting after desirable "and/or donated". She said some lands may not be deemed as "desirable" but the owners are going to donate their land for conservation. M. Richmond asked her if she means the

land may not be desirable for agriculture, but still might be desirable to have it conserved and she said “right”. P. Davies said that it’s not all encompassing; it depends on somebody in the Town evaluating this and deciding if the piece of land would be desirable to have and not accepting any piece of land. He also said this would only apply to land of big enough size; someone wanting to donate half an acre and wanting money for doing that would not be considered. He said “deemed desirable” means some evaluation of the proposal is going to be done as it was for the Prince Farm. The Finger Lakes Land Trust analyzed it, produced maps, and described it.

T. Woods said that he found something on line from the Dept. of Agriculture, the ACEP program, which is the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program that has a filing deadline to apply (prior landlords, American Indian tribes and other eligible entities) by February of each year for the funding to fund the conservation easements focusing on restoring and protecting wetlands, as well as conserving productive agricultural lands and grasslands. P. Davies asked if that’s a grant program, and T. Woods said yes, through the Federal Government. It was stated that there are rules associated with that grant program and it wouldn’t apply in some situations. T. Woods said he was talking about the big parcel they’re currently talking about, not little pieces that may come up later. C. Schutt said that there was a CB document on methods and selection criteria for land preservation and acquisition: Methods and Selection Criteria for Land Protection and Acquisition. 30 December 2014: <http://dryden.ny.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Methods-Criteria-for-Land-Protection-12-30-14.pdf>. M. Richmond spoke about the content of the document. It was decided that this document should be referenced in the resolution. M. Richmond said if you wanted to put a cap on it, on page 31 of the CB document there is a section on Natural Resources Conservation Plan that talks about view sheds and natural areas, etc. He read aloud the last paragraph in that section and suggested adding a line stating the following: and recognize that there may be areas suitable for development by the town or the village and there may be areas that are highly qualified for agricultural continual use. P. Davies said this section should be referenced in the resolution. He said we need to find sources for the income, but that’s additional information. Initially a resolution needs to be passed basically saying let’s do what we can to set up a fund that could be used in the future. T. Woods said there are two local service centers that service the ACEP program, one in Ithaca and one in Cortland. He said he’d go visit them and see what they have to say. J. Grace asked K. Servoss where they can find out what the different types of funds are. K. Servoss said they could ask J. Case, our bookkeeper, and also the Office of the State Comptroller. J. Grace is going to research that issue and report back her findings.

B. Beck made a motion to pass the following resolution proposed by P. Davies:

RESOLUTION # 3 for 2018 FROM THE CONSERVATION BOARD TO THE TOWN BOARD RECOMMENDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FUND TO BE USED FOR THE

PURPOSE OF FACILITATING CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ON SUBSTANTIAL
LANDS WITHIN THE TOWN OF DRYDEN.

Whereas the preservation of farmland, natural areas and open space is encouraged in the Dryden Comprehensive Plan, in the Natural Resources Conservation Plan and in the Town of Dryden Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan,

Whereas there is increasing commercial and housing development in parts of the Town of Dryden,

Whereas conservation easements will foster the preservation of natural areas, and the continued agricultural use of farmland, protecting said areas from development in perpetuity,

Whereas such preservation will be of benefit to the current and future citizens of the Town of Dryden,

Therefore,

The Town of Dryden Conservation Board recommends that the Dryden Town Board establish a fund devoted to expenses related to contributions towards the cost of obtaining such conservation easements on land deemed desirable for preservation* within the Town of Dryden.

* Methods and Selection Criteria for Land Protection and Acquisition. 30 December 2014:
<http://dryden.ny.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Methods-Criteria-for-Land-Protection-12-30-14.pdf>

The motion was seconded by S. Bissen and passed unanimously.

M. Richmond spoke about a piece of property (102 acres) that just last week-end while helping out a neighbor found out that the property might possibly become available for this program. He will speak to the individual(s) when it's appropriate to do so (after the plan is in place).

C. Schutt brought up the question about the Natural Resources Conservation Plan, now that it's been produced, what should be done to make sure it's utilized. He said early on when they were talking about doing this, the Planner's at that time, had a vision that this plan, the Ag plan would be all encompassing with the Comprehensive Plan. He proposed that they ask the Town Board to add the Natural Resources Conservation Plan as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan or at least reference it so that people are aware that the document exists. It was stated that the latest Comprehensive Plan was done in 2005, so for the time being if the Natural Resources and Ag Plans were referenced in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan that would make people be aware of the plan's existence until the Comprehensive Plan is updated sometime in the future. When a new updated Comprehensive Plan is worked on the Natural Resources and Ag

Plan could be the core of a new Comprehensive Plan. M. Richmond said maybe there's some way to say these other two Plans are an update to existing segments already in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan so it would become the updated plan and is incorporated if that's the desire of the Town Board. It would give it greater identity than just adding it as an addendum. Since the Ag Committee is currently working on a resolution to present to the Town Board regarding this subject it was decided that they would look at what the Ag Committee had composed and go from there.

T. Woods reported that he found something on the State website (Ag & Markets) that might help with funding the conservation fund. It's called the FPIG Program (Farmland Protection Implementation Grants). C. Schutt was aware of the program and spoke about it and said they buy out the development rights. P. Davies said that was mentioned at last week Town Board meeting. It's more expensive to buy the development rights than it is to help with the conservation easement. The Town would be required to match whatever funding is granted through the program. B. Beck said that the Town has really got to want to protect some farmland that's especially significant for whatever reason for the Town to want to help buy the development rights. That would require a significant amount of money and not likely to be done in this Town. On the other hand, if any farmer or owner of significant open spaces is willing to donate the conservation easement it gets exactly the same results.

They next discussed the monitoring of conservation easements. C. Schutt said most of these the County Planning and the Town are involved and they monitor them in conjunction with each other. P. Davies said currently the conservation easement monitoring need for the Town is quite small. The understanding is someone would visit (in the official capacity) the area(s) with the conservation easement once a year and make sure the area is still in the natural state. He suggested that for now, because of the small number of conservation easements, we could do the monitoring with one of the committee members volunteering, but if it got bigger we could ask for a corps of recruits from the Town. A process for getting recruits would have to be worked out. M. Richmond said that he'd volunteered to look at the properties in Ellis Hollow. He lives near there and spoke about what the plans are for the area. He said he needs a set of guidelines to work with and he doesn't want to create the guidelines. P. Davies suggested getting basic guidelines from Andy Zepp. M. Richmond suggested getting something from A. Zepp or wherever and this group could look it over and build the guidelines into something that we agree with and approve. C. Schutt said that the Town Board in their resolution to accept this last one, there's a whole list of things. M. Richmond said he was at that meeting. There are several pages that detail what is supposed to be there. J. Grace asked if that is going to be standard or is each one going to be unique. She said that if it's going to be standard then a form (template) can be used to check items off. C. Schutt said he thinks it is going to be standard. M. Richmond said if it were different for each one it wouldn't be manageable. B. Beck said that in a differ-

ent location it might be a different set of guidelines. C. Schutt said that what has been passed covers a lot of stuff; it talks about agriculture and stuff like that. He said he thinks the Town got their template from the Finger Lakes Land Trust. M. Richmond said that currently he's volunteered to do the three that are currently being discussed, but in the future as this goes along their needs to be some system in place to find a "watcher" for that. C. Schutt said that in the resolution it talks about problems and what you're supposed to do if an issue comes up. P. Davies said he thinks it is necessary for the Town Board or the Planning Director to provide the person doing the inspection a letter stating that the inspector (and note the person's name) is authorized to inspect the property for the Town. Without proper credentials problems could come up. He said he'll ask R. Burger for a digital copy of the resolution and e-mail the guidelines that are detailed. J. Grace said we need the following:

1. Standardized baseline document
2. Standardized check up document
3. Who the point person is in the Town that you present the information to

The group felt that R. Burger would be the point person in the Town.

S. Bissen asked if they should have a "Conservation Easement monitor" and would that person be appointed from this Board to do this for a designated timeframe. P. Davies said it would vary depending on the location; we would take the volunteer who lives the closest to the area. If we get too many easements, we'd ask for volunteers to do the monitoring. M. Richmond said we need to get a "starter kit" in place and P. Davies said he'd work on that. T. Woods asked if there were plans to put signs up marking the area(s) as being a Conservation Easement property. No decision was made. J. Grace stated that a protocol needs to be set up so that the landowner(s) would be contacted by a Town Official letting the landowner(s) know someone will be inspecting the property within the next month. B. Beck said that different easements could be quite different; the Land Trust probably has a whole booklet on this. He also said the Land Trust trains their monitors; how you do the baseline documentation and how you monitor it forever. P. Davies said it would be nice if someone from the Land Trust could come and do training for us.

Tompkins County outdoor recreation tourism implementation plan

P. Davies said that much of the plan doesn't involve us directly because it's concerned with the lakes and downtown Ithaca. He noted one item in the plan that was applicable entitled Planning and Development for Enhanced Access to Public Lands and Waters; create plans for outdoor recreation enhancing physical improvements in key under invested areas such as Six Mile Creek natural area and Hammond Hill State Forest, among others, for important trail access points identify a clear set of capital improvements including trail enhancement expansion, trail signage, mapping interpretation and parking. He said as part of their plan we do have the natural areas that are accessible for hiking, etc. marked and also the parking areas. N. Munkenbeck said she thought they meant they'd like to see more and better, like more/better parking areas. P.

Davies said it might be interesting to visit informally some of these areas over the summer and see if parking is an issue and come back with a report. N. Munkenbeck said they're probably thinking about when there are events happening (like Nordic Ski Club) that parking could be an issue. If you just stop by it won't have the same effect. She suggested asking the authors of the document what they meant. B. Beck said this plan was put together primarily to request input from everyone about the way money is used. Most of the money for tourism for the County has been used for things other than outdoor recreation; cultural, arts, etc. They would like to see the money distributed in different ways, put more of the money available into outdoor recreation.

Ithaca Deer Management Plan

P. Davies said this was briefly discussed at the January meeting. The report does emphasize the damage to the vegetation and their main method of controlling the deer was with archers. J. Grace said she thinks that has to do with making it more available (in the Town) because there are restrictions on shooting near residences. She said this has been proposed by the Ithaca Conservation Board, it hasn't been approved through the Town of Ithaca. They're trying to get other communities to be on board with the plan. Cayuga Heights and Trumansburg has done this. They discussed the different methods of trying to control the deer population that other areas have tried. P. Davies asked if they thought we should enter into an examination of deer management in Dryden. The question was asked if that meant for both the Town and the Village. P. Davies said we are only responsible for the Town. It was noted that it's not the same problem in the Town of Dryden as it is in the Town of Ithaca in regards to the management methods. P. Davies said he'd like to encourage more hunters. That would have to be done through the DEC and how they partition how many deer you can get in specific locations. It was mentioned that many hunters think there aren't enough deer in Dryden and if we propose managing the population we'll be getting some local opposition. J. Grace said for that reason she thinks the problem is different and the management solution is different. She suggested creating programs that would connect landowners with people who want to hunt. They all felt that was a great idea. S. Bissen said that currently there isn't a list of properties to hunt on. N. Munkenbeck said there are organizations that have lists for large landowners who allow hunting on their property and who are paid for allowing it. They discussed different ways of compiling/maintaining a list to get landowners and hunters connected. J. Grace said she'd contact the DEC to get information from them regarding landowner/hunter agreements and see if they have a template. N. Munkenbeck suggested contacting Farm Bureau, also. M. Richmond said at some point they might want to talk about coyote management. J. Grace said they need to have data on the coyote population and what damages they cause just like they have for deer.

P. Davies said next month they'll discuss Ditch Management. J. Grace asked if they could get copies of the documents that were handed out at R. Schneider's presentation. G. Dodici said he has copies and will bring them to the next meeting.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by S. Bissen and seconded by M. Richmond. It was unanimously approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Michaud
Deputy Town Clerk