

**MINUTES OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY FARMLAND COMMITTEE**  
**Suffolk County Planning Department**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**Date:** May 30, 2006

**Members Present:** Bennett Orłowski, Jr. (At-Large), Chairman  
Thomas A. Isles, Suffolk County Dept. of Planning Director (At-Large)  
Nate Corwin (At-Large)  
Lee Foster (Southampton)  
Albert Schmitt (At-Large)  
Russell Barnett (Smithtown)  
Olney M. Gardiner (East Hampton)  
Joseph Krukowski (Southold)  
Ronald Bush (At-Large)  
Charlie Scheer (At-Large)  
Mark Zaweski (At-Large)  
Eugene Murphy (Islip)  
Alfred J. Kilb, Jr. (Shelter Island)

**County Staff Present:** Jenny Kohn, Suffolk County Department of Law  
Fedelem, Suffolk County Dept. of Planning

**Guests:** Joe Gergela, L.I. Farm Bureau  
Janet Longo, Suffolk County Div. of Real Estate  
Nancy Graboski, Town of Southampton Councilwoman  
David Klenawicus  
Clare Santangelo  
Joe Annunziata  
Bob Brenner

**Members Absent:** Elmer Zeh (Brookhaven)  
Dan Fricke (At-Large)

Chairman Orłowski, called the meeting of the Suffolk County Farmland Committee to order at 5:00 p.m. at the L.I. Horticulture Research & Extension Center, Riverhead, NY.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Orłowski opened the meeting for public comments. There being none, the Chairman moved to the next item on the agenda.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

Thomas Isles mentioned some of the issues and concerns of special events, such as should the Farmland Committee be supporting these events? How frequent should they be per year? Should there be constraints on special events? Should they be tied in with fundraising events, etc.? Albert Schmitt felt that these events should be held on land not in the PDR Program. Janet Longo, S.C. Dept of Real Estate, informed the Committee that there are a lot of horse farms. One farm has 15 shows per year with 150 to 250 people including grooms and family with no seating and no spectator charge. Joe Gergela told the Committee that there is a need for farmer friendly policies that should be verifiable and enforceable. He suggested, also, that the Committee issue permits to maintain control. Charles Scheer felt that these events should be judged on a case by case basis.

Councilwoman Nancy Graboski discussed Southampton's concern over special events; including standards for public safety, cooking, animals, tents and parking. She said that Southampton has over 100 special events between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The Town of Southampton uses Ag & Markets laws as its guidelines for non-agricultural events on preserved farmland. Ag & Markets law states that raising, training, breeding and selling horses, with nothing commercialized (no paid admission, no bleachers, etc.) on PDR land.

Jenny Kohn told the Committee that no one should be giving interpretations on what should or should not be allowed. Each circumstance should be judged on a case by case basis.

Chairman Orlowski spoke to the Committee expressing his feelings that, when the County buys land, it is buying the development rights only - limiting the land to farming and its preservation. Jenny Kohn clarified that there are other restrictions involved when the County purchases development rights.

Joe Annunziata, who boards, breeds and trains horses, wants to have fifteen (15) one-day horse shows per year (approximately 150 to 200 people), charging no admission, partially on PDR land.

Joseph Gergela suggested the Farmland Committee make an advisory opinion and no formal action to be taken. Most Committee members did not have a problem with Mr. Annunziata's request.

Jenny will be drafting guidelines for "special events" to be reviewed at the July 25, 2006 Farmland meeting.

#### **EDUCATION, CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL TOURS**

Mr. Brenner told the Committee that he has a fourteen (14) acre farm, growing strawberries on 3.5 acres and raises animals (pasture) on 6 acres. The farm is open for school groups and tours as well as instructional classes (workshops for 200 people). He charges admission to approximately 1,700 people (600 in summer), has Mommy & Me classes (560 people), and has five (5) festivals (2,500 people per year). He wants to sell development rights to the County and would like to be reassured that he will be able to continue. Chairman Orlowski told the Farmland Committee that education is part of promotion of the farming industry and asked the Committee how they felt about Mr. Brenner's request. A suggestion was made that he cut out the barns and house as well as classrooms before the County purchases it.

#### **PLAYGROUNDS**

Jenny Kohn told the Committee that fixed equipment is not allowed. It is not an agricultural use. The County Attorney is being asked to give an opinion.

#### **NEW PARCELS**

**See attached**

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

There was a discussion on Farmland Committee vacancies, Elmer Zeh, resignation of Dan Fricke and Jeff Rottkamp approval as a new member of the Farmland Committee.

**A motion to adjourn was made by Bennett Orlowski and seconded by Joseph Krukowski. Motion carried. 13-0-0.**

**Next Meeting: July 25, 2006 at 6:00 P.M. at the L.I. Horticulture Research & Extension Center, Riverhead, NY**