

**Town of Groveland
4955 Aten Rd.
Planning Board Minutes
January 27, 2020
7:30 to 9:40 PM**

Members Present:
Seth Burnette, Chair
Mitje Raschi
Frederick Ingalls, Jr.
Randy Clymo

Code Enforcement:
Ron Maxwell

Others:
Matthew Halladay (Conservancy)
Jeanette Van Arsdale (Sparta Farms)

Excused:
Kathleen Gurak

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The regularly scheduled January Planning Board meeting was opened at 7:30 PM by Seth Burnette, Chair. Four members were present for a quorum. Kathleen Gurak was excused.

2. REVIEW OF NOVEMBER 25, 2019, UNAPPROVED MINUTES.

Chair Burnette asked members to review and consider the above minutes presented. He requested comments. There were none.

Mitje Raschi made the MOTION to APPROVE the November 25, 2019, Planning Board minutes as presented.

Frederick Ingalls, Jr. SECONDED the Motion.

All in favor: Seth Burnette, Mitje Raschi, Randy Clymo, and Frederick Ingalls.

Opposed: None.

Abstained: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

3. SPARTA FARMS CONTINUING DISCUSSION.

Chair Burnette introduced Matt Halladay from the Genesee Valley Conservancy. M. Halladay explained that the Conservancy, hopefully, will hold a Land Trust easement over Sparta Farms. It will be the same sort of agricultural enterprise and support as requested for Highgrove Farms last year. Chair Burnette brought up Highgrove's subsequent transition from dairy ownership to crop farming after it was received into the Conservancy. M. Halladay responded that Highgrove's transition was necessary in order to enable it to be a more profitable venture. He said using Highgrove for a different endeavor still maintained preservation of agricultural soil. It will still be a land base on which to feed people for years in the future.

Mitje Raschi asked for more clarification regarding Ag and Markets and development rights. M. Halladay said the Conservancy will develop a site plan for farming should the land become fallow and the Conservancy would need to take it over.

Alternately, land could be rented to other farmers by the Conservancy. The Conservancy must ensure that good riparian practices continue to be maintained. He then introduced Jeanette Van Arsdale who currently assists her Dad at Sparta Farms. Sparta Farms milks 2400 cows at present.

Chair Burnette spoke about the role of the Planning Board and its responsibility to the community in ensuring planning for the future. Groveland is an agricultural community, but the Town may develop around farming. M. Halladay stated that 30% of land in Livingston County is protected for agriculture only. Planning Board members discussed what might possibly be considered outside traditional farming. For example, could a large commercial firm come in and use agricultural property to test chemical pesticides or fertilizer? The Conservancy requires that only 25% of specific protected property be prime soil. M. Halladay said there does exist legal language in conservancy easements preventing this from occurring.

Regarding additional land being put into the Genesee Valley Conservancy at present, M. Halladay said there is some funding from Long Island farms which will become available in this area. However, following that, it should be another two years before another application is considered.

CEO Maxwell and Planning Board members agreed that Sparta Farms is located on good agricultural soil. M. Halladay then distributed a sample letter of support for Chair Burnette to consider signing and sending to the manager of the New York State Farmland Protection Program in Albany. Development pressure on the surrounding community and the new water line was discussed. It was decided that the Planning Board would benefit greatly with Sparta Farms being in the Conservancy due to its being on some of the best prime farmland in Groveland.

Mitje Raschi made the MOTION that future Conservancy letters in support of specific farms be presented for a Planning Board approval vote before signing by the Chair. Randy Clymo SECONDED the motion.

All in favor: Seth Burnette, Mitje Raschi, Randy Clymo, and Frederick Ingalls.

Opposed: None.

Abstained: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

The letter will be done by the Secretary the following day or two.

Of interest, M. Halladay said there has been no farmland in the Conservancy that has been sold as yet.

4. CEO REPORT.

CEO Maxwell reported that after Charles Comer received a five-year conditional permit renewal from the ZBA, he went before the Town Board to request a zoning change for his property. He claimed that putting a renewal condition on his property was unfair.

He had requested a change in zoning rather than having to come back in five years for a renewal for his truck, car repair business building rental. His case was heard but the Town Board made no changes.

5. NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Battery Storage was next on the agenda. It was brought up that such storage units are filled with lithium batteries which release a trickle charge into the electrical grid when sunlight is low. Chair Burnette noted the lateness of the hour and suggested adjournment. Time needed could then be spent on Battery Storage for incoming Solar Farms at next month's meeting February 24. Currently, battery storage is not regulated by the Town of Groveland and is not even dependent on solar farms. A moratorium will be discussed then.

Mitje Raschi made a motion to request that the Town Board place a moratorium prohibiting the establishment of large-scale battery storage systems within the Town of Groveland.

Randy Clymo seconded the motion.

All in favor: Seth Burnette, Mitje Raschi, Randy Clymo, and Frederick Ingalls.

Opposed: None.

Abstained: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

6. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business to conduct, Chair Burnette called for adjournment.

Randy Clymo made the MOTION to adjourn at 9:40 PM.

Frederick Ingalls SECONDED the Motion.

All in favor: Seth Burnette, Mitje Raschi, Randy Clymo, and Frederick Ingalls.

Opposed: None.

Abstained: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane McMullan, Secretary
Planning Board

dmm