

**Town of Groveland
4955 Aten Rd.
Planning Board Minutes**

**November 25, 2019
7:30 – 8:55 PM**

Members Present:

Seth Burnette, Chair
Frederick Ingalls
Mitje Raschi
Randy Clymo
Kathleen Gurak
Roxanne Adamson, alternate

Code Enforcement:

Ron Maxwell

1. CALL to ORDER:

At 7:30 PM Chair Burnette called the regularly scheduled November Planning Board meeting to order. There was a quorum. Roxanne Adamson was present as an alternate but did not vote.

2. REVIEW of OCTOBER 28, 2019 UNAPPROVED MINUTES.

Chair Burnette requested that members review and consider the October minutes.

Kathleen Gurak made the motion to accept the October 28, 2019 Planning Board minutes as presented.

Frederick Ingalls seconded the motion.

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

Opposed: None.

Abstained: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

3. FARMLAND PROTECTION: Discussion regarding Sparta Farms.

Chair Burnette opened the above discussion by talking about a recent email the Town had received from Matt Halladay at the Conservancy. The email had conveyed that Sparta Farms (a very large successful farm with prime soil) was requesting a “transition grant . . . similar to Highgrove Farm.” Planning Board members questioned whether “transition grant” meant the same as acceptance into the Genesee Valley Conservancy. M. Halladay would like support for this action from the Groveland Planning Board.

How a great deal of farmland being in the Conservancy would affect the fate of smaller farms was discussed. Several farms obtaining development rights are no longer dairies but are now large crop farms. Rather than a way to keep a farm in the family, this fact would seem to promote only large-scale farming.

Another concern for the Planning Board to consider when supporting a particular farm’s application into the Conservancy would be the eventual effect on the Town tax base. Conservancy farms are permanently agricultural; this certainly reduces the possibility of future town development and any resulting tax income that might bring.

Chair Burnette conveyed his understanding that the GV Conservancy administers trust monies granted by the State. Local farmland is signed over to the Conservancy and the State pays development rights to the farmer. The farmer maintains ownership and may be able to sell land, but a parcel must be at least 20 acres and devoted to agriculture. (There would be no capital gains tax.) Members expressed their feeling again that this is forcing farming to become big business.

Chair Burnette asked that Planning Board members study all that was discussed this evening, and specifically the Sparta Farms request from Matt Halladay, in preparation for their January 2020 meeting. The Secretary said that when preparing the final agenda for this evening, she had spoken with M. Halladay. At that time, he had said that he was going to present the request to the Town Board rather than the Planning Board and would not attend the November 25th meeting.

4. CEO REPORT.

Chair Burnette asked Ron Maxwell for his monthly report. CEO Maxwell said that the Macauley subdivision map he spoke about last month has not yet come into the Town for signing.

Regarding other reports, several other dairy farms in Groveland have been sold recently. It is difficult for farms of 300 or less milking cows to make a profit if they have any debt at all. There remain but three dairy farms left in Groveland. Adequate farm labor shortage is another problem for small family dairy farms. Yet, nationally, farm balance sheets have greatly increased this year because of large-scale farming.

5. NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Secretary distributed the "Municipal Ethics" handout from her September training which was requested last month. She also mentioned attending a lengthy "Review of Recent SEQR Cases" and said that handout was available also. The recent Ag Tour training credit totaled 7.5 hours. The two-hour lunch break had been considered as an hour and a half for the solar presentation with the 30-minute balance remaining for eating.

6. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no additional business or announcements, other than holiday wishes, Chair Burnette called for adjournment.

Kathleen Gurak made the motion to adjourn at 8:55 PM.

Randy Clymo seconded the motion.

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

Opposed: None.

Abstained: None.

MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane McMullan, Secretary
Planning and Zoning Board

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