

Watershed Agricultural Council

Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Viability

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MINUTES OF THE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL MEETING

July 23, 2024

I. Meeting called to order at 10:04 a.m.

Directors Present:

Dwight Bruno
James Darling
Paul Gallay
Wayland 'Bud' Gladstone, *Chair*
Karl Gockel, *Treasurer*
Barb Hanselman
Jason Helmbold
Fred Huneke
Tom Hutson, *Vice Chair*
Steve Reed
John Verhoeven
Marilyn Wyman
Shilo Williams, *NYC DEP Representative*

Directors Absent:

Jennifer Grossman, *Secretary*
Jeff Wilson

Others Present:

Ryan Naatz, *Executive Director*
Carol Bishop, *Finance Director*
Connor Young, *WOH Agricultural Program Manager*
Peter Steenland, *Technician & Engineering Coordinator*
Elaine Poulin, *Program Procurement & Contract Coordinator*
Cindy McCarthy, *NM & PFM Coordinator*
Tom Pavlesich, *Forestry Program Manager*
Serena Orleski, *Easement Program Manager*
Mike Morales, *Easement Program Stewardship Coordinator*
Bill Martin, *Easement Program Acquisition Coordinator*

Brittany Schenck, *Forestry Program Executive Assistant & WoH Educator*

Kristan Morley, *Economic Viability Program Manager*

Heather Magnan, *Communications Manager*

John Jackson, *Database Administrator*

Michael VanderWerff, *NYC DEP*

Sara Storrer, *NYC DEP*

Lee Harris, *NYC DOI*

Paul Kaczmarcczyk, *NYS DOH*

Morgan Zyzik-Tarbell, *NYS DOH*

Mary Crisafulli, *The Mountain Eagle*

Elaina Rodriguez,

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the June 25, 2024 minutes, as presented.

Motion: Tom Hutson

Second: Fred Huneke

Approved

III. Executive Director's Report – Ryan Naatz

A. Operational and Programmatic Updates – Dashboards

Ryan requested that council members review and give feedback regarding the update of different programmatic dashboards. Many council members liked the flow and efficiency of the packet materials, while others thought some program material was harder to digest.

Heather Magnan, Tyler Van Fleet, and Heather Hilson have worked diligently on a comprehensive WAC Outreach plan over the last several months. This plan includes coordinating all events, e-News outlets, and more to create a unified outreach effort. More information about this will be presented to the council at the September meeting.

1. EOH Office Status

Ryan and Amy Faulker have been researching new office locations for the East of Hudson staff. Due to environmental issues, staff have been working remotely for several weeks. Additionally, Westchester County has made it clear that they have the intention to complete capital projects in 2027 and will subsequently be repurposing the WAC building at Hilltop Hanover Farm. Together, Amy and Ryan have identified 20-25 potential facilities, but the search continues. They are hoping to secure a new office soon.

2. Staffing Updates

In an effort to help Ryan and Amy Faulkner with day-to-day operations at the Hamden office, they are working with DEP staff to create an Administrative Assistant position. Initial steps in making this happen have commenced, and a draft job description is underway for DEP to review. The funding for this position is made available by relinquishing the East of Hudson tech position.

3. Building Committee Update

The Building Committee has reconvened after a long hiatus, thanks to Karl Gockel, Amy Faulkner, and Michael VanderWerff. The tentative agenda for the first meeting will be discussing timeframes, funding, personnel, and more.

B. Spotlight: Easement Program – Questions asked on an Annual Monitoring Visit (“AMV”) and Why?

Serena Orleski and Mike Morales outlined the Easement Program’s step-by-step conversation during their Annual Monitoring Visits (AMV). As a contract deliverable, these annual visits are routine site inspections on Easement Properties. AMV questions relate to either notification requirements (i.e. intent to transfer property) or Reserved Right Requests (activities that are permitted but require WAC approval.) Each activity has an associated guideline with a list of submission requirements to Easement staff. Requests are reviewed at either the staff- or Committee-level and presented to the Easement Committee as updates or motions for approval.

IV. Chair’s Report – Wayland ‘Bud’ Gladstone

- A. Nothing to report.

V. NYC DEP Report – Shilo Williams

- A. Recently, Shilo Williams replaced John Vickers as WAC’s NYC DEP representative. Hailing from Alaska originally, Shilo is eager to learn more about the Watershed Agricultural Council, and the NYC Watershed.

VI. NYS DOH, US EPA Reports

- A. Nothing to report.

VII. Executive Session

Motion to enter Executive Session at 11:24 a.m. to discuss legal council status, Article 78 claims, and council questions.

Motion: Karl Gockel
Second: Jason Helmbold
Approved

Motion to come out of Executive Session at 11:57 a.m.

Motion: Fred Huneke
Second: Dwight Bruno
Approved

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by common consent at 11:57 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on August 27, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.