

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

OF THE

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

MINUTES

A meeting of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on April 4, 2016.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Kara Hahn, Chairperson
Leg. Al Krupski, Vice Chair
Leg. Sarah S. Anker
Leg. Thomas Muratore (excused absence)
Leg. Robert Trotta
Leg. Bridget Fleming

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George M. Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel/Legislature
Amy Ellis, Deputy Chief Clerk/Legislature
Laura Halloran, Budget Review Office
Katie Horst, County Executive's Office
Lisa Santeramo, County Executive's Office
Sarah Lansdale, Director/Department of Planning
Lauretta Fischer, Department of Planning
Janet Longo, Real Property Acquisition & Management
August Ruckdeschel, Economic Development
Michael Pitcher, Director of Communications/PO
Alyssa Turano, Aide to Leg. Hahn
Catherine Stark, Aide to Leg. Krupski
John Stype, Aide to Leg. Krupski
Robyn Fellrath, Aide to Leg. Anker
Greg Moran, Aide to Leg. Trotta
Elizabeth Sutton, Aide to Leg. Fleming
Rick Brand, Newsday
Dave Schwartz, Newsday
Kimberly Quarty, Peconic Land Trust
Robert Carpenter, Long Island Farm Bureau
Karen Rivara, Long Island Farm Bureau
Becky Wiseman, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Philip Schmitt, Schmitt Farms
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

4/4/2016 EPA Committee

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 10:07 AM

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Welcome everyone to the Legislature's Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee. If we could all rise for the salute to the flag led by Legislator Anker.

SALUTATION

Thank you.

PUBLIC PORTION

Okay. We have public portion and we have a number of cards here. Everyone who's called forward, you'll have three minutes to speak. The time will be on the timer on the wall over on the side. The first speaker is Kimberly Quarty followed by Robert Carpenter.

MS. QUARTY:

Good morning. Kimberly Quarty with Peconic Land Trust. And I'm here to speak on behalf of the Sisters of St. Joseph, who have submitted an application for the program for the sale of development rights to the County on approximately 17 acres on a parcel identified as Suffolk County tax lot number 100, 203, 1 and parts of 4, 5 and 6. The Sisters have been operating an organic farm here for approximately 20 years. They're currently operating on about three-and-a-half acres with plans to expand to the full 17 acres this year. And they are a viable operation where they have an operating CSA. They also grow enough extra food there to donate to the community to the Interfaith Nutrition Network. And this property contains prime ag soils, has significant road frontage along New Highway and the Tony {Castromento} Highway. If this land was protected, it would provide significant view sheds for future generations as well as active farmland.

And we request your support of this acquisition in that this is also one of the farthest western farms in the County and we would like to keep agriculture western as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Are there any questions? Oh, Kimberly, would you mind just answering a few questions?

MS. QUARTY:

Sure.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Krupski?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

No.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I'm sorry. Legislator Flemming.

LEG. FLEMING:

Thank you. It's the height. Hi, Kim.

MS. QUARTY:

Hi.

LEG. FLEMING:

Good morning. Do you have any information on the CSA itself, how many participants and for how long it's been running?

MS. QUARTY:

It's been running for approximately 20 years. And last year they sold 100 shares -- 100 full shares and, I believe, it was 30 half shares. And they've been selling out for the past three seasons so that's another reason they're looking to expand.

LEG. FLEMING:

And what sort of produce is -- passes through the CSA?

MS. QUARTY:

They just sell, I mean, a general veg -- mixed vegetables. They have a very large variety. They also do honey there. And, I mean, I could provide you with a full list if you'd like, but I don't have it with me in front of me.

LEG. FLEMING:

Thank you. And just looking at the map, I notice that it's pretty well developed all around the parcel. Are you aware of where the nearest fresh vegetables are other than this CSA? In other words, would this qualify as a food desert or do we know in terms of access for the folks who live there to fresh vegetables?

MS. QUARTY:

Yeah, I'm not aware of any other fresh vegetables in the area, no.

LEG. FLEMING:

And the 20 years that the nuns have been running this, has that participation in the CSA, do you know, been pretty steady or --

MS. QUARTY:

It has been steady. And they have kept it at a minimum for several years because they -- they were just trying to gain a comfort level, which they have, and they've surpassed that so now they're -- that's why they're looking to expand.

LEG. FLEMING:

And if we were to authorize the acquisition of the development rights, do you have a sense of what the nuns would be doing with the funds?

MS. QUARTY:

They would just be putting it back into the land.

LEG. FLEMING:

And do they -- is that what they're going to be using in order to farm the additional -- is it 17 acres?

MS. QUARTY:

Yes. I mean, they'll be using some of it for the farming. They will actually use it to help with their facility on-site and to be sustainable going forward. They're looking to implement some -- some solar initiatives there as well so they'll be using it for that.

LEG. FLEMING:

Do you know if it's irrigated at this point, the other 17 acres?

MS. QUARTY:

It's not. They're using public water because of some plume in the area so they have to use public water even for irrigation.

LEG. FLEMING:

And that would be the case going forward if we were to buy --

MS. QUARTY:

-- yes, u-hum.

LEG. FLEMING:

-- the development rights? Okay, thank you so much.

MS. QUARTY:

Sure.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

One more question from Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Sorry about that, Kim. I was just looking for the rating sheet. It's a question about the production there so would they -- do they realize that if the parcel is sold to -- the development rights are sold to the County, that they would have to maintain production there every two years?

MS. QUARTY:

They do realize that, yes. And they're fully aware and ready for that.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Okay. Thank you.

MS. QUARTY:

Sure. Any other questions?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

No.

MS. QUARTY:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Robert Carpenter followed by Karen Rivara.

MR. CARPENTER:

Good morning. I'm here to talk today about the Suffolk County Agricultural Stewardship Task Force or a plan update. In 2003 the Suffolk County Legislature passed a resolution to establish a task force to develop an agricultural environmental management policy and program designed to promote the County's agricultural industry while protecting groundwater and surface waters. The current Ag Stewardship Program at Cornell Extension is a result of that report. Today the agricultural industry on Long Island sees an opportunity to decrease nitrogen and pesticide levels even further by strengthening and better targeting the existing agricultural stewardship program.

This program has already shown meaningful decreases in nitrogen and pesticide inputs as it relates to agricultural practices. However, despite their great strides that we have already made through

4/4/2016 EPA Committee

the efforts of this program, the lack of funding to complete the original vision of the task force has left us short of our goal. The original Ag Stewardship Task Force report called for \$17 million in funding over the course of ten years. And we received only about 4.9 million.

Since 2004 the Ag Stewardship Program has worked in conjunction with Cornell Extension's ag specialist, Cornell University professors to provide commercial agricultural industry with a comprehensive program of research, education and on-farm demonstration projects to address environmental issues related to agricultural's use of nitrogen fertilizer and pesticides. Additionally the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District and Natural Resource Conservation Service have both developed programs and assisted farmers in working to develop and implement best management practices on farms.

Now, there is increased pressure to decrease nitrogen and pesticide levels even further on Long Island's groundwater. We in Long Island's agricultural industry are willing to do our part by making the Ag Stewardship Program even more effective. Working together with Cornell Extension, Suffolk County Soil and Water District, NRCS, American Farmland Trust, Peconic Estuary Program, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Suffolk County Water Authority, Suffolk County Planning Department, Suffolk County Health Department and the County of Suffolk, we have established a plan that will fulfill the requirements of the State Agricultural Environmental Management Program; and if you approve this report, will be accepted by New York State and Suffolk County as the stated plan for agriculture to address nutrient and pest management. The Agricultural Stewardship Plan will be incorporated into the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan and the Suffolk County Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan.

The purpose of the Suffolk County Ag Stewardship Plan is to provide a framework, a series of recommendations and associated budget to promote the long-term responsible management of farmland in the County consistent with Suffolk County's Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan and the County Executive's Reclaim Our Water Initiative. It is a proactive approach to growing environmental concerns relating to estuary and health, water quality and public health in the County. The program works on Federal, State and County cost share initiatives to assist farmers as they transition to more environmental conservation practices. We at Long Island Farm Bureau have worked long and hard on this report and we are fully supportive of the practices and the funding sources that have been developed that we're going to try and go after to help the farmers in the County do even better.

So I urge you to approve the report today and pass it so we can move on and begin to do even better work to secure the funding necessary that we need. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Any questions? Thank you.

MR. CARPENTER:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Karen Rivara followed by Becky Wiseman.

MS. RIVARA:

Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Karen Rivara. I'm President of the Long Island Farm Bureau and also a shellfish farmer on the east end of Long Island in Southold. And I'm here to speak in favor for the adoption of the Agricultural Stewardship Plan. I believe it addresses the concerns regarding nitrogen from agriculture going into our ground and surface waters.

4/4/2016 EPA Committee

Since 2001 when the Peconic Estuary Program Comprehensive Management Plan was released, the impact from agriculture of nitrogen was about 41%. It's been reduced to 16 according to recent reports. And I think that speaks to the commitment the agricultural community has to address this issue. So what we're looking for is the adoption of the plan to help the agricultural community get the funding they need from the agencies that will help them further reduce their impact on the surface and groundwaters.

As a shellfish farmer, I feel very strongly about this. I have continued to move my operation east to run away from harmful algae blooms. And one of the greatest causes of these blooms is excess nitrogen in the estuary. It's actually too bad that we have to move our operations away from harmful algae blooms or in some cases we can't. Our animals are filter-feeders so they actually reduce the amount of algae in the water and prevent bloom explosions. But when they can't digest the algae or it's harmful to them, they then die. And I've lost as much as \$100,000 worth of shellfish seed in a given year due to harmful algae blooms. So it's very important to my industry that this -- this issue is resolved.

I feel that this plan has -- is based on sound science. I do -- I'm not a PhD but I do have a BS in Marine Science so I do appreciate the science that has gone into this plan and the goal of the plan to actually collect more data to help us get an idea of where the impacts are greatest and also the progress that we've made. And I look forward to supporting as a shellfish farmer similar plans in the future that would address the nitrogen coming from other land use such as residential.

So, again, I support -- I strongly support this plan. It was developed with a lot of different governmental agencies and it'll be an important plan going forward and, I believe, possibly a model for future plans and even in areas outside of Suffolk County that are addressing the effect of nitrogen from agriculture.

So, again, I can't support it strongly enough. And I also have a letter of support from the Long Island Oyster Growers Association. I don't know if you want me to read it into the record. I've paraphrased a bit of it, but I have this for the Committee.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

We will -- are there copies there?

MS. RIVARA:

Yeah, I have five copies.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. We will pass it out to the Committee. Thank you.

MS. RIVARA:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Any questions? We have a question from Legislator Trotta.

MS. RIVARA:

Yes.

LEG. TROTTA:

Are you aware of any policies that, you know -- you mention that the public's not doing it and homeowners aren't doing it, is there anything that -- that -- studies that you have or anything that we can institute to make sure that people living near the water, or anybody, reduces the amount of nitrogen that's going into the groundwater and the estuaries?

MS. RIVARA:

I think the -- according to a recent report out of Stony Brook, the major source of nitrogen coming into our estuaries is from residential septic systems. So, you know, those need to be addressed. I think you can look at places like Rhode Island. They try to focus on waterfront homeowners and have them upgrade their septic systems within a certain time period. And that's not just for new construction, but also for existing in the Peconics and, I think, in the other estuaries you have summer communities with old septic systems that --

LEG. TROTТА:

What about -- what about the golf courses?

MS. RIVARA:

The golf courses? I believe the golf courses are in the same way that agriculture has tried to reduce their impact are doing the same thing. I know Riverhead is experimenting with trying to use water from the sewage treatment plant that's been processed to fertilize the golf course there. So there's a lot of innovation, control-release fertilizer that does not leach into the ground and surface waters as quickly, buffers between the water and the land.

LEG. TROTТА:

Are we doing -- I mean, are the County golf courses doing that, like using low nitrogen fertilizer?

MS. RIVARA:

I believe some of them are but I really can't speak to what the County golf courses are doing.

LEG. TROTТА:

What about like Sebonack and those other ones, the ones that are right on the water there?

LEG. FLEMING:

I know -- when Sebonack was built, the Town of Southampton required that they had lined greens and they recycle their water. So they're trying to -- their model is that it's trying to contain the wastewater from the fertilizer that's coming off the greens.

There's another golf course near there that also has protocols in place for monitoring because it's right over a deep part of the aquifer that's in Noyack. I know the Town of Southampton Poxabogue Golf Course recently initiated best management practices based on Sebonack and that Noyack course to make sure that their impacts are low so they're moving in the right direction. Hum?

LEG. TROTТА:

Do we monitor that at all?

LEG. FLEMING:

I know the Town -- at least Southampton Town monitors the protocols at those two golf courses. I think Indian Island in Riverhead, AI, actually uses a recycling system to prevent -- because that's right on the Peconic River. I don't know, AI, maybe you know better than I.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Well, Indian Island will use the water coming from the sewage treatment -- Riverhead Sewage Treatment Plant.

LEG. TROTТА:

They're doing that now?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

No, this season they'll start. It was a big \$24 million upgrade. So the County made a big investment there. The County spent about a third of that money to reuse that wastewater instead of pumping it as had been discharged into Peconic Bay; now it'll be spread on the golf course. And I think that was a yearlong test period with New York State and Suffolk County Health Departments and the DEC to make sure that that was safe for the golfers and safe for the workers, you know, because it's not only nutrients but also pathogens.

LEG. TROTТА:

Don't they do that at the one in Babylon there?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

No. The one by the Southwest Sewer District?

LEG. TROTТА:

Yeah, isn't that loaded with --

LEG. KRUPSKI:

No, no, it's not, but this is -- the one in Riverhead, I believe, is going to be used as a template countywide for other golf courses.

LEG. TROTТА:

Okay.

LEG. FLEMING:

I think Rob asked some really great questions. And in the Ag Stewardship Plan that we are looking to adopt, on page eight there is a pie chart that shows the distribution of uses and impacts. And it shows that whereas agriculture is attributed with 16.7% of nitrogen loading, septic systems are shown to contribute 43% and golf courses 4%. So I think that there is a misperception around agriculture's impact on nitrogen loading that's been moving over the course of time as Karen pointed out. But we -- I think in the General Meeting coming up, we're going to be considering some funding for some of the work that the County Executive's Office is doing around pilot programs and septic systems to try and reduce that number. So we have an opportunity, I think, to impact it with some of the work we're doing now on the septic systems.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Karen, I have a question. You said the Long Island Oyster Grower's Association is -- you mentioned them. How many members do you have roughly?

MS. RIVARA:

We have -- we have just sort of restarted the group, but at our dinner meeting we had about 40 people show up. And people are, you know, becoming members.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

That's great that -- I mean it shows a lot, that they're supporting this plan. And it's good that that industry, which was once a really major economic force out here --

MS. RIVARA:

Yeah. And the County has had a lot to do that with that with the aquacultural Lease Program in the Peconics. That was another program from the County that was really important and has probably created about 30 oyster farms in the Peconics.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Okay.

MS. RIVARA:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Becky Wiseman.

MS. WISEMAN:

Good morning. My name is Becky Wiseman. I am the coordinator of Cornell Cooperative Extension's Agricultural Stewardship Program. This program was established in 2004 by the Suffolk County Legislature.

So I would like to begin my comments by saying that we at Cooperative Extension are very pleased with the amount of work and the cooperation between the organizations and agencies that went into this review and the update with the 2004 Suffolk County Agricultural Stewardship Program Report. The final report is really an extension of what we at Cooperative Extension started in 2004.

I would like to tell you a couple of CCE Ag Stewardship Program's success stories. Of the 585 reported farms by New York State Ag and Market, we really have 347 that are greater than ten acres. And of that, 90% are using sustainable management practices; and 75% of the farms are participating in Cornell Cooperative Extension's pest and nutrient management programs.

For the past five years, we've been conducting on-farm projects using controlled-released nitrogen fertilizer that is designed to break down over time instead of the more conventional product that is water soluble. CRNF reduces the leaching and the amount of nitrogen that is applied at planting. Twenty percent of our potato growers are using CRNF this year. And through the support of grant funding, we're expanding the number of acres in potato unfarmed demonstration projects up to 100 acres participating in these CRNF projects this year.

We began like five or six years ago with very small one-acre side-by-side planting. So this year we're up to 100 acres and see the more and more acres that are participating, the more and more adoption in the program of the CRNF program. We estimate this year that 80% of sweet corn growers will be using control-release nitrogen fertilizer products. This report will support all of our joint efforts. Rob Carpenter mentioned all of the organizations that contributed to this report. And it will assist us in moving forward to access additional funding so that we continue to protect Suffolk County's Water Quality and the viability of our agriculture industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you all today.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Any questions? Thank you. That was our final card. Is there anyone in the audience who would like to speak before the Committee? You already spoke. Is there someone else?

AUDIENCE MEMBER:

Phil Schmitt wants to speak. He can't find a card.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Oh, excellent. Okay, Phil, come on back in and we can give you a card after you speak. Phil, all right? Here he comes. Come on up. We'll give you three minutes and then -- if you promise to fill out your card later (laughter).

MR. SCHMITT:

Okay, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you.

MR. SCHMITT:

I won't be three minutes, I promise. I'm Phil Schmitt. Just a brief background, I served on the Suffolk County Task Force in nitrogen and pesticide reduction with Legislator Fisher back, how many years ago it was, and I also serve on the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Ag Stewardship Committee at Cornell.

And just briefly, a few of the things -- I mean my -- most importantly I'm a farmer in Riverhead. We've been employing a lot of these practices on our farm. In the last eight years, seven years we've started doing a lot of on-farm composting. We do soil testing on our farm. Every year I've raised the organic matter from -- most of the farm was below 1%. I'm going to say the bulk of it now is between 2 and 3%, which is really -- really important as far as being able to efficiently use the nitrogen that we do apply. We've changed our tillage practices. We do a lot of zone tilling for corn. We use controlled-released fertilizer again, really important for some of the different -- for sweet corn and sunflowers, some of the long season crops. Some of the quick season crops I do not. It's really not -- there's some new technology getting there.

And I guess the only other comment I would have, I know there are some that are -- say well, just make the farmers reduce -- reduce their usage by 25%. And I'm going to tell you that's not going to work. Cornell, Rutgers, Penn State, whoever it is, has been doing research and they say for the most part it takes X amount of nitrogen to grow a certain crop. I don't see how you're going to change that. The only thing we can do is change the way we do it, which we are doing. If they want to regulate us out of business, which is happening and it's a whole 'nother discussion, you know, so be it. But I'm just here to tell you that that's what we're doing, that's what I'm seeing in the industry. And, you know, hopefully we're moving forward in the right direction. And if you want me to sign a card, I will.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

No, Phil, thank you. I actually -- there's a question -- I have a question and Legislator Krupski has a question. Thank you so much for your participation. I actually worked for Legislator Vioria Fisher --

MR. SCHMITT:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

-- way back when. And I think I would have participated in some of the meetings with you. So thank you for your participation all these years in working towards where we are today.

What do you think -- what else do you think we can do to bring along other farms that may not be participating at the level that you are and -- in order to convince them that these best practices for the environment are also good for business?

MR. SCHMITT:

I mean, supporting this program, I mean some of it does have to do with funding. I invested, you know, quite a bit of money in compost handling material. You know, machinery, things like that to do that. I mean, the research that Becky's doing with the controlled-release, I mean, you know, we're getting there, we're getting these guys to try it. It's expensive. You know, I mean that's all

I do on my sweet corns. It's all controlled-released fertilizer. Again, you know, to see the -- they need to see the results that it is going to work. You know, that's kind of it in the nutshell. It's, again, we bought a zone tiller for our corn. I mean, I did a lot of research on my end. It was a \$12,000 investment. I think it's -- it was worth the investment.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

And at Cornell we often vote, you know, each year on funding for Cornell for these programs. And sometimes it's, you know, a little bit of a struggle between east end and west end Legislators over this. And so if you could just attest for the benefit of some of the other Legislators who are here about how the studies and the research that Cornell is doing actually helps to educate the farmers about the benefits of the slow released, etcetera.

MR. SCHMITT:

Well, I mean -- I think, you know, we've all -- the agriculture community's always looked to Cornell for -- whether it's right here in Riverhead, which a lot of it is. A lot of it comes from Ithaca. Again, and State, Rutgers, you name it, I mean we're all -- it's an ongoing education thing. And I mean -- and we do help fund it. It's really important. I mean, the west end Legislators, I think, know that a lot of their constituents like to go to the east end and see what's happening out there, you know.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I remember -- I remember seeing --

MR. SCHMITT:

Not to get off the subject, but some of the -- some of the agriculture's in dire straits out there. So, you know, it's tough.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I remember taking a tour where they demonstrated, you know, side by side, you know, how -- how the crops benefit from the slow-release fertilizer and actually show it in a real visual manner for folks to see. And so hopefully that helps in the educating of the other -- the other farmers --

MR. SCHMITT:

It is. It's -- honestly when we're, you know, not to get into stories, but when we first did the zone till, you know, we do it into a rye cover crop that we burn down. And it's, you know, you're used to having a field that's well-tilled and looks beautiful and you see the little corn coming up. Well, this, you look at it, it looks like a mess to be honest with you. You see all these -- all straw sticking up. And the next thing you see is a little corn. But, you know, my dad really had a problem with it (laughter), you know. But once -- you know, once the corn got up and, you know, got a foot tall and the debris died down, and, you know, that also helps just that debris decomposing there helps to retain a lot of the nutrients and stuff. I mean, it's definitely a learning curve. Don't get me wrong. We're still learning. I mean, there were certain practices we really had to do differently than we've done before to adopt this stuff, but, you know, it's certainly coming along.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. Legislator Hahn asked -- asked my questions. I was going to ask you how -- no, that's good. I was going to ask you how you've changed your practices, you've got a multigenerational operation. And I think we've all been through it. Like you said, your father didn't like the way it looked (laughter). But, you know, you make those changes, but you make them because people are doing that research that's important and they're supporting -- you know, they're supporting your

operation, which is hopefully a commercial operation.

MR. SCHMITT:

Yes, it is.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Everybody wants in on this. Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Well, I just want to say it's been a pleasure, you know, working with you, you know, at the Soil and Water Conservation District Committee meetings and also Rob and the folks here. And I am very much impressed at the -- you know, at the change, you know, not only in the process but the mindset. And like you said, it may take a generation or two for it to be a very comfortable process to, you know, to do more of an organic application versus, you know -- you know, stronger nitrogen. You know, I live in a community that has a high incident of cancer. And, you know, for 15 years in my -- in my neighborhood, you know, I've had an organic lawn. And it wasn't easy at first. And it wasn't easy for the school to switch over in Mt. Sinai when I was on the school board. So there's a lot -- a lot of pressure to have something that looks really good, but it may not be the best thing for them.

So, you know, I think this a wonderful process. And I have to give a lot of credit to Cornell Extension and also the people working with Cornell -- Becky, thank, you -- you know, {Sharam}, Polly and, you know, and Long Island Farm Bureau but -- and your efforts in working with this issue. Because it's here and we've identified it. And it will take time to, you know, for it to become better, but it's nice to be working and cooperating and communicating, you know, together as we move forward, but thank you.

MR. SCHMITT:

Thank you. The next -- maybe that brings to mind just one more comment that we actually spoke about with Vivian back on that other Committee. And although, I guess, we want to call some of the practice I'm doing more organic, at the end of the day it's still nitrogen. It doesn't matter what the source is. I mean, the idea is to keep it here. I mean, you can't get any more organic, say, than, you know, manure but that can be a real problem. I mean, that's nitrogen. So, you know, you have to keep that into perspective that just, you know, my opinion, the controlled-release fertilizer is probably better than the organic fertilizer. It's very specific. It really -- it holds, you know. And it does not release with water. It releases with temperature. So the warmer it gets, when the crop really starts growing, then it'll start releasing more rapidly so that the crop can take it up rather than have it go elsewhere. So that's, you know, something to keep in mind that sometimes, you know, people don't think about that.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

And the handling practices though, too, are important. I know that part of what the -- you know, the different protections when putting it into the machinery, etcetera, you know, all of that's important as well as I'm sure --

MR. SCHMITT:

Yeah, that's -- yes, that's certainly part it.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Trotta.

MR. SCHMITT:

I don't think spilling of the product, there's really much of that.

LEG. TROTТА:

How much more expensive is the slow-release fertilizer?

MR. SCHMITT:

How much more expensive? Becky's done more of the research. I'm going to say 30%. That's sound about right.

LEG. TROTТА:

So that would -- that would equate to what percentage increase in your crops?

MR. SCHMITT:

Well, you know, one of the things that offsets it is now that I'm zone tilling -- I mean before we used to plow the ground. Then we'd come in and disc it several times, get it nice and level, plant the crop, which you can still do with this fertilizer. But being as I'm doing zone tilling --

LEG. TROTТА:

What is zone tilling?

MR. SCHMITT:

Where we just till probably eight to ten inch strip. As corn we plant every 30 inches. So the whole strip in between remains the cover crop from before. That stays there. So we're just tilling a small strip. And with that -- I mean, as I said, it's a learning curve. It led to different weed control practices. With that debris there, we no longer cultivate the property after it gets up to till the weeds. So there's more cost in the fertilizer, but now I'm making a lot less passes across the ground with my equipment to maintain it. So you can offset that cost.

LEG. TROTТА:

So you don't -- you let the cover crop grow and then it'll die off once the corn gets high?

MR. SCHMITT:

Yeah, well, we generally chemically burn it down. That's what you have to do.

LEG. TROTТА:

So you put chemical --

MR. SCHMITT:

Yeah, you know --

LEG. TROTТА:

Ground up type stuff and such.

MR. SCHMITT:

Exactly, which in my opinion --

LEG. TROTТА:

Has its own issues.

MR. SCHMITT:

Yeah, it's pretty safe stuff, though, you know. Again, it's -- again, it was the learning curve because the thing you need to -- I mean, you can't have the -- you have to kill that -- you can't have that rye there competing with the corn.

LEG. TROTTA:

Yes.

MR. SCHMITT:

But then it, you know, leads to less soil erosion and, again, hopefully better holding of the nitrogen.

LEG. TROTTA:

Okay. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Flemming, quick -- quickly.

LEG. FLEMING:

Yeah, I just wanted to make a quick point that this discussion is so helpful and also really highlights the need for the Ag Stewardship Plan and for us to pass it. Because this is a -- this is about going forward and this is about capturing funding. This is not -- you know, there's no simple answers to this and we need the businessmen and women who are the farmers weighing in on the questions that are complicated. I mean, we talk about groundwater and pesticides and chemicals and Sarah's concerns, we talk about nutrients and surface waters and the Bay -- you know, our estuary programs, they're not all the same. There are a lot of different issues involved. And we need sort of an all-hands-on-deck effort going forward that includes the farmers so that we are sure that the efforts are not going to kill the farming industry. These are business people and they need to weigh in on it specifically. Those efforts take funding and this plan is going to allow us to continue to pursue funding whether it be the EPF that, you know, State Legislature just voted a big increase and we'll be capturing some of that under this Ag Stewardship Plan or other sources of funding, but it's a great plan to be able to do that.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Okay. Were there any other individuals who'd like to speak before the Committee? Okay, seeing none, we will close the public portion and we will move onto Tabled Resolutions.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

Introductory resolution 1172, Authorizing an appraisal for the purchase of Development Rights of Farmland under the Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program, as amended by Local Law No. 24-2007, John P. Kujawski and Sons, Inc. Town of Riverhead (SCTM No. 0600-022.00-02.00-013.007). (Krupski)

Okay, we do have maps that were provided by Laurretta Fischer and so you can pull them up on your laptops or they are on the screen there. Thank you. Do we have -- still have a rating sheet for this one? Oh, I'm sorry. Thank you.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

We e-mailed all maps and rating sheets --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Got it.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

-- to members of the Legislature on Friday.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Yes. Okay.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

This property was reviewed by the Suffolk County Farmland Committee during its biannual review in -- at its March 17th meeting and has recommended to the Legislature that this be included in the County's Purchase of Development Rights Program. It received a rating of 18 out of 25 points. And happy to go into further detail.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

And it was tabled because it had not gone through the Farmland Committee at our last Committee meeting?

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

Right.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. Go ahead. If there's details that we need, thank you. Does anyone have any questions? Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

I mean, this is a good example of preserving the big block. And you can see the land around, it's been preserved. I just thought -- and I made -- we did make a formal comment to Suffolk County Planning that it should have under adjustments on the rating sheet, it really should be a community benefit if you look at -- currently there could be five driveways on it -- on a narrow country road. And the community benefit would be, you now, at the very least -- so, one, you're eliminating five driveways. The other community benefit is you're eliminating five backyards in a -- adjacent to land that has been preserved for agriculture with public funds. So it just seemed like that should be a -- just -- if you could -- we could note that, that should have got a higher rating.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

And so the area in pink, I guess it is, it's the pink is the acquisition?

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

And the -- the yellow we already have the PDR. Riverhead. Sorry.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

Those already had PDR.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

RH, Riverhead, got it. Thank you. Okay. Did we have a -- we don't have a motion or anything yet, right? Motion by Legislator Krupski.

LEG. TROTТА:

I have a question

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I'll second the motion. And on the motion, Legislator Trotta.

LEG. TROTТА:

Real quick. Are we doing five appraisals or one appraisal?

MS. FISCHER:

One.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

This is --

LEG. TROTТА:

Same person owns them all.

MS. FISCHER:

Yes. And they will be considered one lot; to be combined into one lot. Because of the small size, we wouldn't consider them individually.

LEG. TROTТА:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Okay. We have a motion and a second. Were there any other questions? All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1172 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

Introductory Resolution 1176, Authorizing an appraisal for the purchase of Development Rights of Farmland under the Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program, as amended by Local Law No. 24-2007, John P. Kujawski and Sons, Inc. Town of Riverhead (SCTM No. 0600-022.00-02.00-013.007). (Krupski) This is another by the same owner, I'm taking it.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Right next door.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

So, again, this was reviewed by the Suffolk County Farmland Committee and recommended for inclusion. It scored 17.5 points out of 25 and it's 25 acres for possible inclusion.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

And then there's a 5.9 acre cutout, which will not be purchased. The owner will maintain that 5.9 acres. This was one lot.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

And the previous resolution you'll see the parcels outlined in yellow, lower right-hand side of the map. That's the previous resolution.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Thank you. Questions? Or we should make a motion.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

I'll make a motion.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Motion by Legislator Krupski; seconded by Legislator Fleming. On the motion, Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

I'd like to, you know, encourage everyone to approve this. This is a -- this adds, again, to a big block of farmland. For decades it has been in a mostly potato grain -- small grain rotation. But it, you know -- that's today. And this land's been farmed for hundreds of years. And so you don't know going forward what the production will be there, but at the very least we can ensure that there'll be a nice solid block of farmland available in the future.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

And I also want to point out that this also has 17.5 points out of 25, which is a high score for us.

And I did forget to mention that Legislator Muratore has an excused absence today. I apologize. I should have done that first thing.

Okay. We have a motion and a second. Any other questions? All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **11766 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

Introductory Resolution 1225, Adopting Local Law No. -2016, A Charter Law to ensure agricultural representation on the Planning Commission. (Fleming).

LEG. FLEMING:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Motion by Legislator Fleming.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Second by Legislator Krupski. Any questions? All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1225 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

Onto Introductory Resolutions, **Introductory Resolutions 1258, Appropriating funds in connection with the new Enhanced Suffolk County Water Quality Protection Program 2014 Referendum Water Quality Projects (CP 8733.310). (Co. Exec.).** I'll make a motion.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Second by Legislator Krupski. Any questions? All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1258 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

1262, Appropriating funds in connection with the new Enhanced Suffolk County 1/4% Drinking Water Protection Program - 2014 Referendum - land purchases (CP 8732.210). (Co. Exec.). I'll make a motion to approve; second by Legislator Anker.

LEG. TROTТА:

On the motion.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

On the motion, Legislator Trotta.

LEG. TROTТА:

This is a 2014 referendum where everyone voted for the --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Quarter cent.

LEG. TROTТА:

Quarter cent. No.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

So these --

LEG. TROTТА:

The borrowing of the 30 million?

MR. NOLAN:

Yes, open space piece.

LEG. TROTТА:

The other one just prior.

MR. NOLAN:

This is the open space part \$20 million. Just before that we did the sewer infrastructure piece. This is the money that's being borrowed for those purposes pursuant to that referendum.

LEG. TROTТА:

All right. I want to -- can I change my vote on the last one?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Do we need to re --

MR. NOLAN:

You have to make a motion to reconsider.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Make a motion to reconsider. He can't.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

I'll make a motion to reconsider.

LEG. FLEMING:

I'll second it.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

He can? Okay. Motion to reconsider by Legislator Trotta; second -- motion to reconsider Introductory Resolution 1258 by Legislator Trotta; second by Legislator Krupski. Does it matter? Let's just go back and -- you know, that's fine, we'll let you change your vote.

So we have a motion and a second to reconsider. All those in favor of reconsidering? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay, so 1258 is before us again. I'll make a motion to approve; seconded by

Legislator Krupski. All those in favor?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Well, on the motion could you get -- Director Lansdale, could you explain the program?

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

Sure. So this water quality program is -- projects would be considered. There would be a call for applications similar to ones that have been done under the leadership of Frank Castelli in the Department of Economic Development and Planning. We would review the proposals and then bring them forward to the Legislature for your consideration.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

But the -- I think the question more surrounds the source of the funding and what would happen. So suppose we don't approve the -- appropriating the funds today. What would then -- what would happen at that point?

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

When the --

LEG. KRUPSKI:

That's a question for George.

MR. NOLAN:

Well, this is -- you gotta remember that this program was approved as part of settling a lawsuit. Secondly, this was approved by the voters that they want -- you know, rightly or wrongly, they want us to spend \$20 million for open space and about 4.7 for sewer infrastructure and another 4.7 for the water quality projects. So if we didn't -- if we didn't approve it, we'd be acting inconsistently with the Charter and also obviously the people who sued us originally might not look kindly upon it.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you.

LEG. TROTTA:

I have a -- this is -- just to be clear, this is when we essentially forfeited or gave the ability for the County to go in and take \$100 million from the Sewer Stabilization Fund to pay cost to run the County; is that correct? That was on the same referendum?

MR. NOLAN:

That was the same -- the same bill, yes.

LEG. TROTTA:

Okay. So I was against that, raiding the sewer fund and putting us deeper in debt. So I will never support this, not based upon that I'm not for open space or sewer stabilization. Based upon mismanagement of the administration, I will not support this.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

We have a motion and a second on 1258 the second time around. All those in favor? Opposed?

LEG. TROTTA:

Opposed.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

We have an opposition, Legislator Trotta. Abstentions? **1258 is approved. (VOTE: 4-1-0-1.**

LEG. TROTTA OPPOSED. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)

Introductory Resolution 1262, Appropriating Funds in Connection with the New Enhanced Suffolk County 1/4% Drinking Water Protection Program - 2014 Referendum - land purchases (CP 8732.210) (Co. Exec.) We have a motion and a second to approve; however, I see -- I'm going to recognize Lisa Santeramo from the County Executive's Office.

MS. SANTERAMO:

Yeah, we'd like to table this for a cycle. We're still talking to bond counsel about the correct way. I think we might need to do an amendment.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. So I will withdraw my motion to approve and introduce a motion to table; seconded by Legislator Anker. All those in favor of tabling? Opposed? Abstentions? **1262 is tabled.**
(VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)

Introductory Resolution 1309, Adopting Local Law No. -2016, A Local Law to limit nitrogen content in lawn fertilizers. (Lindsay) This needs to be tabled for public hearing. I'll make a motion to table; second by Legislator Fleming. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1309 is tabled.** **(VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

Introductory Resolution 1311, Accepting the updated Suffolk County Agricultural Stewardship Plan. (Krupski)

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Krupski makes a motion to approve; seconded by Legislator Flemming. On the motion. Anybody like to say anything? No? Okay, Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Again, I will, you know, mention my thoughts as far as -- we need a plan, everybody needs a plan to get from here to there. And this will take us to a better place. You know, we're looking to protect our groundwater. We put, you know, hundreds of millions of dollars into, you know, the groundwater issue. And this will -- this will provide the direction that will, you know, help with working, you know, with our farmers and addressing the concerns with pesticides. You know, I think this is going to be a very successful direction.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. Director Lansdale, did you or the department or division want to add anything? I know Augie's here. I don't know if --

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

I'd like to acknowledge the leadership of all of those who have worked on this, especially Augie, for drafting large parts of this as well as the leadership and perseverance for the past two years of all of the groups working together on this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Okay. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1311 is approved.** **(VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

Introductory Resolution 1313, Reappointing member of the Council on Environmental

Quality R. Lawrence Swanson. (Hahn) I'll make a motion.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Second by Legislator Krupski. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It is approved.

(VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)

Introductory Resolution 1318, Authorizing an appraisal for the purchase of Development Rights of Farmland under the Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program, as amended by Local Law No. 24-2007 Rottkamp's Farm Property Town of Riverhead (SCTM No. 0600-061.00-02.00-007.001). (Co. Exec.)

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Motion by Legislator Krupski.

LEG. FLEMING:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Second by Legislator Flemming. On the motion, Laretta and Director Lansdale.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

Yep. So this receives an 18.25 out of 25 points. It's been farmed for a very longtime. It's 21.3 acres and it's in the Town of Riverhead. The property is currently planted in vegetables, asparagus, corn, tomatoes, pumpkins and squash. And we recommend its inclusion.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Page six of the thirteen is the map. So we have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1318 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

Introductory Resolution 1319, Authorizing an appraisal for the purchase of Development Rights of Farmland under the Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program, as amended by Local Law No. 24-2007 Fink's Country Farm Property Town of Riverhead (SCTM No. 0600-115.00-01.00-004.001p/O). (Co. Exec.)

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Motion by Legislator Krupski; second by Legislator Fleming. Okay, on the motion.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

So this is -- this property is located in the hamlet of Wading River, Town of Riverhead. The property is 17.4 acres in size with 10.2 acres proposed for the purchase of development rights. The property's currently planted in pumpkins, tomatoes, eggplant, melons, cucumber and squash and has been in production for at least five years.

4/4/2016 EPA Committee

The property received a rating of 9.5 out of 25 points. The property was reviewed by the Farmland Committee and recommended that this be included for your consideration in our Purchase of Development Rights Program.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Fleming.

LEG. FLEMING:

Just have a question about the rating system and road frontage. Does this not qualify as having road frontage? I know the rating system --

MS. FISCHER:

The cutout is along the road.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Right, to get rid of the road frontage.

MS. FISCHER:

And that's why it didn't receive points for that. It's a large cutout along on the eastern side of the property along Wading River Road.

LEG. FLEMING:

Oh, I see.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

You have a question, too? Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

I would -- I would support this. This isn't as cut and dry certainly as the last one that we just approved, but this one does add to a larger block of preserved farmland in the area. It certainly does not have points for being in an ag district, but it would -- they can certainly apply to enter the ag district. And the alternative there would be residential development. So I think this is something that would be welcomed in the community.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Trotta.

LEG. TROTТА:

How are they going to -- it looks like it's landlocked; there's no road there, no?

MS. FISCHER:

There's going to be a flag lot of the farm parcel, about a 20 foot right-of-way on the southern portion of the property so that access would be provided to the farm parcel.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

That's noted on the map.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

How is it farmed now? Where is the access from?

MS. FISCHER:

It's one parcel from -- at the present time so they have access right off of the road at the present time.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Right, but I don't see --

LEG. TROTTA:

Where it says SCPDR, is that the same owner?

MS. FISCHER:

No, that's the -- that's a different farm parcel.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

That is the same owner.

MS. FISCHER:

But it may -- yeah, it may be accessed through that parcel.

LEG. TROTTA:

Normally with a score of 9.5, is that something that we would -- I mean it seems fairly low to me.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Ten is the threshold?

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

Ten is the threshold. It's a recommendation. And the Farmland Committee has recommended this to -- for your consideration.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Because then it would -- it would change hands and it would become part of a larger existing operation.

LEG. TROTTA:

Half of it is woods?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

It's scrubby. And then once they own it, they can clear it.

MS. FISCHER:

Their intention to us is that they'll be clearing that if they haven't already.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

No. The wooded portion of the parcel that we are looking to buy the development rights for, the north rectangle above what's currently being farmed is the scrubby portion of the parcel that they're suggesting will be farmed; cleared and farmed. Legislator Fleming.

LEG. FLEMING:

I think we heard at the Farmland Committee that it's part of a long-term plan for this farmer to also clear the cutout so that that would be on the road frontage and you would then have the -- no?

MS. FISCHER:

No, that's not correct. That's for a different piece I think you're -- you're thinking of but their -- their cutout is along the road here and it will be retained as a cutout.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

But still could be farmed. That's a parcel that still could be farmed. It just wouldn't be preserved.

MS. FISCHER:

(Shaking head yes)

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Right. They could do whatever. They would own it separately, completely. All right. I just want to look at the rating sheet one more time. So it received --

LEG. TROTТА:

Sarah, are you recommending this? Or do you recommend these things?

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

After extensive discussion with the Farmland Committee, yes, I do recommend this.

LEG. TROTТА:

Okay.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

May I?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. I mean, the rating sheet is helpful and it does put it into context with all the other parcels that we're reviewing now and that we've reviewed in the past. But, really, if you look at it a little more straightforward, this adds to another block of preserved land. You're talking about land that, you know, the public has spent money on to preserve for agriculture. This adds to that block. So in the most simplest of terms, it adds to an existing operation.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Right, and it got the three points for that, right, by adding to properties --

MS. FISCHER:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

You know, properties on the sides of it. So, it's the point five points that we all are struggling with.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Well, if you're -- I mean if you're stuck on that, like I said, they're -- now that it's going to be actively farmed, they could add -- add it to the ag district and it would bump it up.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Where is the ag district boundaries?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Well, I don't know -- I don't know where the boundaries are, but they can add it to it now.

MS. FISCHER:

Ag district boundaries are determined by the parcels that are placed within the program. So there's not an area --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

All right. Okay. So -- but they haven't done that yet even though they farm a portion of this parcel.

MS. FISCHER:

Yes. Right.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It is approved. **1319's approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

Introductory Resolution 1320, Authorizing an appraisal for the purchase of Development Rights of Farmland under the Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program, as amended by Local Law No. 24-2007 Island Hills Stables Property Town of Brookhaven (SCTM Nos. 0200-290.00-01.00-009.000 and 010.000). (Co. Exec.) Motion to approve by Legislator Anker; seconded by myself. On the motion, Director Lansdale.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

So this property is located in -- west of Rocky Point Road and south of Whiskey Road in the hamlet of Middle Island, Town of Brookhaven. The property's 13.2 acres in size and is currently used for commercial horse boarding and equine operation and has been in operation for 30 years. The property includes 3,269 square foot barn for stabling horses among other amenities. At the present time there are two buildings that accommodate 70 horses with more than 20 paddock areas located outside. The property received a score of 10.5 out of 25 points and has -- it received points for prime soils, being located within a census designated place with a population density greater than 1,000 persons per square mile. The property was reviewed by the Farmland Committee and recommended for inclusion.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Next up, Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

So I -- let's see, my daughter is 24. When she was probably seven or eight years old, we used to go there for horseback riding. And it's a really important parcel in the Middle Island, in the surrounding communities. Surprisingly there are a lot of equestrian stables hidden, you know, like little pocket parks; well these are, you know, horse farms. And, you know, it'd be, I think, a great accomplishment to bring this into Suffolk County and to approve this parcel.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. So if you take a look at the map, even though it says it's not contiguous to preserved farmland, it is contiguous to preserved open space. And I think that should get -- that's worthy of note also because you are preserving contiguous land whether -- you know, regardless of its use, public or private.

LEG. ANKER:

I also want to comment on that. You know, my district even though, you know, we may have lost so much farmland, you know, from Mt. Sinai going out to, you know, even Wading River, and now we're dipping down to Middle Island, you know. Here we have the ability to preserve farmland. And, you know, we have a lot of open space, a lot of people come out from all over, you know, New York to visit, you know, our East End. And I still -- still feel that my district is part of that East End.

And, you know, you can see, you know, as Legislator Krupski had mentioned, that there is a lot of open space surrounding this horse farm. And I really feel this would be such an asset to the community, to the district and just to the residents of Suffolk County.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1320 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

Introductory Resolution 1321, Authorizing an appraisal for the purchase of Development Rights of Farmland under the Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program, as amended by Local Law No. 24-2007 Nuns of the Order of St. Dominic Farm Property Town of Babylon (SCTM Nos. 0100-203.00-01.00-004.000p/O, 005.000p/O and 006.000p/O). (Co. Exec.)

LEG. FLEMING:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Motion by Legislator Flemming; second by myself. On the motion.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

Parcel is located in the hamlet of North Amityville, Town of Babylon. Property is 29.2 acres in size with 17.5 acres proposed for the purchase of development rights of farmland. Property is currently planted with mixed vegetables and has been in production for 20 years. The applicant has stated that approximately four acres of the 17.5 acres under consideration, or about 23% of the property, is in active agricultural production with plans to expand to 17.5 acres this season.

So that principal farm use as previously stated during the public portion is for community -- a CSA, where shares are purchased by members of the community and they also donate shares of food to the local food pantry.

The property received a score of 8 out of 25 points. It's received points for prime soils being located within a census designated place with a population density greater than a thousand persons per square mile, as well as community benefit.

The property was reviewed by the Suffolk County Farmland Committee meeting and was recommended to the Legislature that 17.5 acres be included in the Suffolk County Purchase of Development Rights Program subject to the following condition: That upon acquisition, the proposed individual tax map lots shall be merged together to create one tax map farm lot.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I'm a little confused by the dots and the pink lines and the cutout. Which is the area? I mean, I see it's -- okay, you're pointing to the proposed 17.5 acre area, but what is that dark pink?

MS. FISCHER:

The other two parcels that'll be cut for this 17.5 acre. So where the dotted line passes through the two pink parcels to the east is what will be considered part of the 17.5 acre farm PDR.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. And the west -- the whole area around the building down to the road with no name that's north of Russell Court is in the cutout.

MS. FISCHER:

That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Even though there's a dark pink line around it.

MS. FISCHER:

Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay, that's a little confusing. Okay. Legislator Fleming.

LEG. FLEMING:

Just a question on the negative factors. I notice -- and this may be because I'm new at this, in parentheses it says "substantial portions are not in active ag production." Could you just explain that a little bit and how that might be impacted on the fact that the nuns are planning to expand the operation?

MS. FISCHER:

Chapter 8 of our County Code indicates that the property has to be in active production, basically the entire property when we acquire it. So that has to be taken into consideration at this time.

LEG. FLEMING:

But it would be appropriate for us to look at that with an eye toward the fact that, in fact, once they -- if they're able to financially, they're going to expand their operation.

MS. FISCHER:

They've indicated that they'll be doing -- they'll be farming it this season. So they're anticipating moving forward even faster than that.

LEG. FLEMING:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. So it did get two points for community benefit. Specifically, what is the benefit?

MS. FISCHER:

We considered the CSA a community benefit. We've -- it's a new type of use that is new to the County's PDRs, but we felt because of the outreach in this area for -- with a CSA, that that was a community benefit.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Again, is that the production of the organic food to the food pantries; is that what you're addressing?

MS. FISCHER:

The CSA is part -- people buy shares. And it's kind of like a co-op type of arrangement. And then in addition to that, they also outreach with, you know, providing -- donating food to local food {inaudible} pantries.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

So community-supported agriculture you would -- you would go there and you would pay them upfront before the season started. They were to use that money upfront instead of trying to recoup it throughout the growing season. In return they're guaranteeing you so much produce every week throughout the season. So basically it's a long-term contract with the grower for the season.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Do you know if this happens to be a food desert area? Augie? Maybe Augie would know, do you? Would you happen to know if this is a -- do you mind coming up to the podium?

MR. RUCKDESCHEL:

Say that again.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Augie, would you happen to know if this is a food desert area?

MR. RUCKDESCHEL:

Oh. You know, I don't know off the top of my head. I know you asked Kim about that. We can't think of anything in the near vicinity, but I think the substantial donations that they make would speak to the public benefit that Laretta was referring to as well. And clearly, I mean, just knowing the demographics of the area, you know, access to fresh healthy foods is always going to be paramount in that area.

LEG. FLEMING:

May I?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Fleming; then Legislator Trotta.

LEG. FLEMING:

I just wanted to understand when Augie said "paramount," paramount meaning it's vulnerable -- it's vulnerable. It's an unusual thing in this area to have access to this kind of fresh produce.

MR. RUCKDESCHEL:

Absolutely. I mean, we see that frequently in a lot of the West End towns where they don't really have access to real fresh healthy food. I mean, this is something that comes up in the Food Policy Council all the time. So this is a real asset.

LEG. FLEMING:

And so I think the idea that they're donating to food pantries is important, but I think it's just as important or maybe more important that families in the vicinity are actually, you know, regularly enjoying and eating these kind -- this kind of nutrition, you know, paying for it and enjoying it. It's important. Thank you, Augie.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Maybe we can help get the word out about that. Legislator Trotta.

LEG. TROTTA:

Is this the Dominican Village?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Just state your name one more time.

MS. QUARTY:

Kimberly Quarty with Peconic Land Trust. And it is the Dominican Village. It's uh -- actually --

LEG. TROTTA:

I know where it is.

MS. QUARTY:

It's not the same parcel but it's the property just south of that. It's owned by the same owner.

LEG. TROTTA:

I'm shocked they're not selling it. Great. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

That's exactly what could happen. They could easily sell it to a developer to create condominiums, apartments, whatever, increase traffic, increase congestion. And, you know, like Mt. Sinai's friary, they could have easily sold the property to development. And, you know, thank God --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Take a look at that map.

LEG. ANKER:

Yeah, we have the ability to keep open space, to keep farmland within a fairly densely populated area. So I will be supporting this resolution.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Yeah, that map makes it really clear up there about how -- how dense it is around the edges of that triangle and how, you know, the opportunity is really clear visually.

LEG. TROTTA:

Is there any extra points for, like, being in western Suffolk? Is there some --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Yes.

LEG. TROTTA:

There is?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Go down on the "adjustments" under E.

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

Yes, there are.

LEG. TROTTA:

How do we increase that?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

(Laughing)

LEG. TROTТА:

Seriously, I mean, we just went through 20 out east and one to the west. I mean, I would think that something -- this is not a conversation for now, but, you know, down the road that if it's something in western Suffolk, there should be a better or a higher point value for that because, you know, we have way less open space than the East End. So is there some way that we can increase the point value for being in a more highly populated area?

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

It's something certainly that we can take under consideration. One of our goals this year is to look at the rating sheet. This was a recommendation contained in our Farmland Protection Plan that was adopted by the Legislature last year; is to look at the rating sheet and make suggested adjustments to it.

LEG. TROTТА:

Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1321 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-1. LEG. MURATORE NOT PRESENT)**

Okay, there's no more work before us, we are adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 11:21 AM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**