

**COUNTY OF ROCKLAND
PARKS COMMISSION**

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C. SCOTT VANDERHOEF
County Executive

PARKS COMMISSION
Chairman Thomas B.
Vanderbeek, P.E.
Diane Gruskin
Richard G. Israel
Norman P. Szymanski
Geoffrey Welch
R. Allan Beers, Coordinator
Environmental Resources
Michael DiMola, Park Manager

PARK COMMISSION
MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT

Thomas Vanderbeek, Chairman
Diane Gruskin
Norman Szymanski
Geoff Welch

R. Allan Beers (staff)
Michael DiMola (staff)
Gene Herskovics (staff)

OTHERS

Dave Llewellya – Glynwood Center
Virginia Kasinki – Glynwood center
Pat & Jim Cropsey
Jo Anne Pedersen – Town of Clarkstown Rec.

Rudy Damonte – Town of Clarkstown Parks
Chuck Voss – C.T. Male Consultants
John Raquet – Camp Hill Farms
Mike Kantor – Camp Hill Farm
John McDowell – Camp Hill Farm
Derald Poderson – Camp Hill Farm

Meeting opened at 5:40PM
Quorum at 5:50 PM

ITEM 1 – Acceptance of Minutes – March 27, 2008
N. Szymanski seconded by D. Gruskin - unanimous

ITEM 2 – Public Participation
No Public Present

ITEM 3 – Camp Hill Farm Proposal Cropsey Farm
A. Beers introduced J. McDowell from Camp Hill Farm.
J. McDowell gave an overview of Camp Hill Farm and its Bio-Dynamic vegetable farm operations.
He also provided an overview of how the Rockland Farm Alliance was formed and its goal to increase farming opportunities in Rockland County.

V. Kasinki provided an overview of the Glynwood Centers Keep Farming Program. The community based farming program provides grants and workshops throughout the Hudson Valley to encourage local farmers to continue farming on their land. They also reach out to the community to help residents understand the importance to support your local farmers.

J. McDowell is proposing a no-cost lease to farm approximately 5-acres of land at Cropsey Farm. A power point presentation was reviewed. The proposal includes:

- Leasing 5-acres for bio-dynamic farming including a greenhouse.
- Start a local CSA (Community Supported Agriculture).
- Subsidized shares to special groups/non-profits, local schools.
- Open a model farm for public educational purposes.
- Community events, agricultural festivals and school educational programs.

D. Gruskin asked how many shareholders they would need to sustain the farming operations.

M. Kantor said that approximately 120 shareholders would be needed. Each CSA would cost approximately \$800. per year. That would entitle the shareholder to received one basket of vegetables per week enough to feed a family of four.

N. Szymanski asked what happens if the fundraising efforts fall short?

M. Kantor said the operation would be scaled back based on the revenues collected.

J. Pedersen informed the group that the Town of Clarkstown had hired C.T. Male to prepare a master plan for the Town of Clarkstown Parks including Cropsey Farm. The Town has been contacted about starting a community garden at Cropsey Farm.

T. Vanderbeek said that this is an interesting proposal and questioned how an Agreement can be structured.

A. Beers said that the County could not gift the use of land to a private entity. This situation is different from other municipal agreement with farms because this property has been dedicated as parkland. The farming proposal is consistent with the proposed uses of the property; however, it may have to be publicly bid. He continued saying that this proposal will have to go through a number of reviews from the County Executive to the Department of Law.

The Commission agreed to move forward with the proposal and send a request to the County Executive to have the Department of Law research how an agreement can be made between the County/Town and Camp Hill Farm.

ITEM 4 – Update:

- Open Space Acquisitions

Cowboy Fields Property – A. Beers informed the Commission that there has been no word from the South Orangetown School District on the offer made on the 29-acre property. In addition Scenic Hudson has informed A. Beers that they are withdrawing their financial commitment due to the length of negotiations, there was never a formal offer. The Department of Law has recently sent another letter to the School District asking them to consider the offer in a timely fashion.

Ramapo Land Company Property Acquisition – A. Beers informed the Commission that a closing on the property has been scheduled for September 29, 2008.

Dutch Garden Property Acquisition

A. Beers informed the Commission that an offer of the appraised value of \$900,000. Negotiations continue with the owner on how to structure the sale. The property will be used to provide access including handicapped access into the park.

Kakiat Park Pedestrian Bridge

A. Beers said that the plans have been finalized and the project will be bid in the next 2 weeks with an anticipated start in the spring of 2009.

Park System: Park Operations Manger Report

- **Park System**
 - Patrolled the Park System to protect the public and parkland.
 - Performed routine trail maintenance and improvements included clearing drainage.
 - Removed dead and dangerous trees as needed.
 - Performed routine lawn maintenance.
 - Performed roadside clean ups including during Great American Clean up.
 - Completed annual trail trimming of park trails.
 - Facilitated stocking of rivers and streams with trout.
- **Haverstraw Bay Park**
 - Over seeded lawns as needed.
 - Weeded and mulched beds.
- **Kennedy Dells Park**
 - Prepared park for the County Executive’s Outstanding Environmental Volunteer award.
 - Prepared park for Sept. 11th Memorial Ceremony.
 - Completed auxiliary lot expansion.
- **Gurnee Park**
 - Continued preparations for parking area.
 - Had material on site ground for later use as mulch.
- **Dutch Garden**
 - Lined beds with stone.
 - Repaired erosion on paths multiple times.
 - Planted bed by access gate and daffodils in beds.
 - Began mulching beds.
- **Management Issues**
 - Coordinated field operations of the Parks Department.
 - Processed permits for use of park facilities.
 - Administered the Youth Corp Community Service Program.
 - Prepared purchase orders, requisitions purchase specifications.
 - Reviewed General Municipal Law applications.
 - Prepared security schedules for Haverstraw Bay Park.
 - Coordinated special events, construction and improvements.
 - Researched tax delinquent properties.

- Addressed staff issues as needed.
- Prepared policies and directives for Parks Department.
- Coordinated building and utility repairs including the sewer ejector pumps at Haverstraw Bay Park.
- Coordinated the preparation and installation of new parking area at Gurnee Park and Amphitheater.
- Prepared specifications for equipment and vehicle.
- Performed training for Steps to a Healthier New York Trail Docents.
- Visited Open Space properties.
- Prepared 2009 Operating Budget for review by Coordinator.
- Reviewed budget cuts and determined impact on operations.
- Met with Transportation and Health Education in reference to bus service to the parks.
- Attended Algonquin Pipeline Safety Training.
- Met with Coordinator and Environmental Health in reference to the Hudson River Advisory Outreach Program.

Item 4 - New Business

A. Beers informed the Commission that the Town of Haverstraw and Village of West Haverstraw never completed the landscape restoration work on the park property after the project was completed. He notified the engineer by email and received a response that explained that the Town and Village never included the landscaping in the project to save money. In addition three neighbors now like the open views that were created as a result of the construction work. Permits from the DEC and Drainage Agency along with the Agreement with the County required the town and Village to landscape the property in accordance with the landscape plan submitted by them for our approval.

The Commission felt this situation is outrageous considering that the County went out of their way to help the municipalities in correcting this significant drainage problem. They directed A. Beers to notify the County Executive and take all necessary steps to require the municipalities to landscape the property.

Item 5 – Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7PM

Next meeting to be scheduled in early December.

Respectfully submitted by:

R. Allan Beers

Michael DiMola