

Colchester Land Trust Meeting Minutes for October 9, 2008

Attendees: Lisa Hageman, Leslie Curtis, Cathy Shea, Barry Ford, Marty Podskotch, Will Hochholzer, Chuck Toal, Andy George, Pete Dane

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm

Approval of Minutes: from August 14th Regular Meeting and Sept. 15th Board Meeting. Will motioned to accept both sets of minutes. Marty seconded. All were in favor and motion carried.

1.0 Current Business

- 1.1 **Standard & Practices:** Chuck presented two documents related to easements. The first was a letter to be presented to a property owner considering the donation of an easement early in the conversion. The second was a letter that would be presented later in the conversation to formalize the agreement. Chuck noted both documents were designed as boiler-plate and as such, were more inclusive, allowing inapplicable text to be removed. Various suggestions were made for amending the documents so as to reflect that any advisors to the property owner should be familiar with land use issues and IRS regulations and that a single appraisal would be necessary 60 days prior to the signing of an agreement. It was noted that Yellow Book appraisals were needed only if purchasing an easement and only to obtain a DEP grant. Chuck will make some final modifications and provide to Cathy for safe-keeping. The next Standards and Practices will deal with Acquisitions.

- 1.2 **Town Wide Mailing/Membership/Renewal:** Barry presented a letter to be mailed town-wide noting recent achievements and asking for memberships. Chuck will put article in newspapers to notify residents of the membership drive and to look for the mailing. Comstock Marketing will do the mailing for us for \$375 which, as Barry noted, is very generous. A suggestion was made to thank them by providing a free (1/4 page) ad in the phone book.

The Board agreed to thank any higher-level supporters with a personal phone call.

Cathy will send the mailing to current members who live outside of Colchester.

Barry will print business cards for Lisa and Chuck as well as some generic, nameless cards that can be used by everyone else.

- 1.3 **Phone Book Update:** Tim Curtis will call last year's advertisers for renewal, but Leslie noted that the economy is bad and advertising is down. Barry will be sending a postcard to all 490A designations to notify farmers of free advertising offer and to obtain info about their products, hours, seasons, etc.

- 1.4 **Agricultural Viability Grant Update:** Discussion of what our next steps should be: A suggestion was made to push the town to take the next step of applying for a follow up grant and that we try to get the farmers together to form a panel or forum. Lynn is behind schedule so it is unknown as to when a public comment meeting will be held by the town. A suggestion was made for the Land Trust to attend that meeting as citizens. Leslie suggested that we need to guide the selectmen in town and encourage them to enforce state guidelines for 490A assessment. Leslie will put together some recommendations to make to the Board of Selectmen after obtaining current valuations. A suggestion was made that Diana Giles may be able to provide information. It was also suggested that Andy take a look at the Woodstock Conservation Commission web site which was quite farmer-friendly.

- 1.5 **Funding Committee Update:** Pete spoke regarding the progress of the Funding Committee which has decided to meet quarterly on the 1st Thursday in Feb., June, Sept., Dec. as these months precede the run up to our main fundraising activities. Pete expressed the need for a volunteer coordinator who could be called upon to recruit and manage volunteers for activities such as the Art Auction and the Salmon River Run. Barry would like the Art Auction to be better publicized in the rest of the state and a volunteer coordinator would be able to make contacts outside of the immediate area. Lisa was interested in how we are cultivating relationships with larger donors, but little progress has been made in this area. Most of the current large donors are either board members or anonymous. A suggestion was made to prepare a calendar for grant applications so that we can be sure to apply in a timely fashion.

- 1.6 **Cato Corner Celebration:** Will be held by invitation only on October 31st at 3:00pm. The Land Trust is the successor trustee to the CT Farmland Trust for the Cato Corner easement and board members are invited to the event. Suggestions were made to also invite some local politicians, and press folks. Lisa thought a press release to the New York Times and/or Wall Street Journal may be in order as Liz is well known in the area from the NYC Farmer's Market.

- 1.7 **Miscellaneous:** Jack Faski has encouraged us to join the CBA. The annual dues are \$80.00. Andy motioned to join. Cathy seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Andy will check availability of a room at the town hall for the November public meeting with Fritz Gahagan. Currently, the Library Room B is booked but is likely not large enough for the anticipated attendance.

- 1.8 **Holiday Party:** A suggestion was made to hold the "holiday" party/annual meeting in January as December is too hectic. A location has not been decided.

2.0 Adjournment: Marty moved to adjourn the meeting. Barry seconded. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

3.0 Upcoming Events/Meetings:

- 3.1 **October 31st – Cato Corner Farm Celebration**
- 3.2 **November 13th – Fritz Gahagan/Library Room B**
- 3.3 **December 11th – Regular Meeting**
- 3.4 **January 8th – Annual Meeting/Winter Gathering of Members**
- 3.5 **February 12th – Regular Meeting**
- 3.6 **March 12th – Regular Meeting**
- 3.7 **April 1st – Artist's Reception**
- 3.8 **April 9th – Regular Meeting**
- 3.9 **May 9th – Salmon River Run**

Respectfully submitted by Cathy Shea