

TOWN of ELMA CONSERVATION BOARD

February 28, 2006 – MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

The Regular February Meeting of the Town of Elma Conservation Board, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on Wednesday, February 28, 2006 at 8:00 PM in the Conference Room at the Elma Town Hall, 1600 Bowen Road, Elma, New York.

PRESENT:

Member Bryant Zilke, Acting Chairman
Member Raymond Boy
Member William Jackson
Member William Massaro
Member Glenn Reinhardt
Member Marc Schneckenberger
Alternate Kenneth Schroeder
Alternate & Recording Secretary Diane Rohl

ABSENT:

Chairman Fred Streif

GUEST SPEAKER: James Loesch of the Orchard Park Conservation Board indicated that the Town Board is trying to keep rural the southern end of Orchard Park. The program began in 1992 with eligibility for land conservation easements at a minimum of five acres and a period of no less than ten years. He said that it is essential for the success of the program that good working relationships develop between the property owner, the town attorney, the assessor and the conservation board. "The assessor is critically important when it comes to value changes."

PENALTIES: Mr. Loesch said that penalties involved in breaking land conservation agreements will never be sufficient to prevent developers from buying the land. He said that our goal should be to get people who really want to leave their property undeveloped. He also indicated that Erie County has said they will not be committing more money to increase the existing infrastructure. Therefore sewer capacities and roads are going to be limited.

IDENTIFY PROPERTIES: The Orchard Park Conservation Board created an overlay of properties using SBL numbers and Greenprint Maps. With this information, the Board could get an idea of which properties would be desirable before the Board went public with the program. Zoning can be a great tool to preserve green space.

ASSESSMENTS: Mr. Loesch explained the procedure used in Orchard Park by the assessor to value the land. It is broken up: frontage, possibly next 20 AC(+/-), then the remaining acreage in the back. Value of farmland could be determined by the NYS Agricultural Program. In response to a question by Bryant Zilke, Mr. Loesch said revaluation can take place if the market changes. If the homeowner is having difficulty paying his taxes, he can appeal.

BUILDING PERMITS: When a building permit is approved in Orchard Park, the building inspector does not have a list of easement properties. He must go the Conservation Board files. Developers must go to the Conservation Board and negotiate how much land they are willing to preserve as green space. The average size of a development is 60-70 AC.

ORCHARD PARK LAND CONSERVATION BOARD: Mr. Loesch considers their board to be very non-partisan. The Board must prepare an annual report for the Town Board. Their program is kept on a computer in the Town Office; also assessments and tax relief data. They have also explored purchasing development rights (PDR); grants including one that would have given money back to the farmers which they subsequently decided against; land trusts and the WNY Land Conservancy Program.

ECB MEMBERS BIO: After Mr. Loesch completed his presentation and left, the ECB Members individually introduced themselves and gave a brief biographical sketch, in some cases of their family history in the Town of Elma and the amount of land owned.

ECEMC APPOINTMENT: There was a brief discussion with a suggestion by Marc Schneckenberger that this be a rotating appointment between all the ECB Members. It was decided to have **Fred Strief** attend the first meeting only of the Erie County Environmental Council and bring back more information before a final decision is made.

Motion Brian Zilke; Second Ken Schroeder

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

GIS APPOINTMENT: Because of his computer background and his familiarity with land conservation programs, it was decided to appoint **Glenn Reinhardt ECB Representative** and **William Massaro ECB Alternate Representative** to learn the Town of Elma's GIS Program.

Motion Ken Schroeder; Second William Jackson

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS: It was also decided by unanimous consent that all future meetings be held at 7:00 p.m. instead of 8:00 p.m. Diane Rohl as Recording Secretary will notify the Town Clerk so that all meetings posted on the Town Calendar will reflect this change.

Motion Raymond Boy; Second Glenn Reinhardt.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

FUTURE GUEST SPEAKER: It was decided that we should invite Kandace Wittmeyer, Town Assessor, to speak to the ECB either March 14th or 15th at 7:00 p.m. Diane Rohl volunteered to have a current list of properties in Elma with easements for the next meeting.

Page 3 (ECB 2/28/06)

PREPARATION FOR NEXT MEETING: It was also decided that ECB Members would focus on reviewing application easement forms in an attempt to design one for the Town of Elma; and to review the process outlined in the Elma Town Code to determine if changes and/or additions should be made.

Bryant Zilke distributed information on Land Conservation Programs to ECB Members:

American Farmland Trust – Cost of Community Services Studies

Town of Penfield - Laws, Application, Agreement, Public Information

Town of Clifton Park – Laws, Agreement

Town of Perinton – Laws, Zoning, Application, Agreements

MOTION TO ADJOURN at 10:35 p.m. Glenn Reinhardt; Second Bryant Zilke
Ayes – 7 Nays: 0

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