

**MINUTES**  
**ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**March 19, 2018**

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:05 AM. Directors J. Wright, P. DeBlock, G. Keeton, M. Kemnitz and P. Ruskiewicz were present, along with K. Sumner, T. Ferry and C. DeGroot (OCSWCD) and J. Heller (NRCS).

**2018-3-1 Keeton made the Motion, Ruskiewicz seconded, to approve February's Board Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor**

**ACTIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS** –None.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- Bank account statements from the District's banks were available for review.
- Copy of letter from Orange County to Senator Bonacic regarding funding for the Walkkill flood work.
- Letter from the District to the NYS DEC in advance of last Wednesday's meeting regarding the Celery Avenue tree cutting.
- Letter from the District to Joseph Murray, Environmental Analyst, NYS DEC, requesting a modification of our permit for the flood plain bench project to modify the planting.
- Orange County's Resolution regarding the Flood Control Maintenance Project for Quaker Creek. Wright mentioned they have Sumner's title as Director instead of District Manager. This Resolution was originally written with the wrong project limits as well and when they sent Sumner a draft he pointed it out to them and they still did not correct it.
- Letter from Sumner to N. Halloran, Building and Zoning Inspector for Town of Goshen, regarding the Floodplain Development Permit. We did not hear anything back.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

There was a review of February's financial reports. Performance Measures Part C funding is down this year from approx. \$92,000.00 to ~\$87,000.00. We are tracking the Walkkill Flood money that we receive quarterly in our appropriation from Orange County on the dedicated fund summary. We are in good shape vehicle-wise but we should start thinking about purchasing a new seeder. We will look into other brands and see what other Soil & Water Districts use. **2018-3-2 Keeton moved to file February's 2018 Financial Report for audit review, Wright seconded. All in favor.**

Sumner reviewed the list of Bills to Be Paid with the Board. When Orange County took over the legals regarding CFI, we were told there may be some fees the District would have to pay. #5 on the list is a bill from the court reporter. Brief discussion followed about recouping any fees in the future. **2018-3-3 Wright made the Motion, Keeton seconded, to accept the Bills to Be Paid. All in favor.**

**STAFF REPORTS**

- C. DeGroot
  - The annual audit by O'Connor Davies was conducted on March 8th and 9<sup>th</sup>. The auditors requested a Collateral Agreement from one of the District's two banks. We sent a copy of the agreement to the Auditors to confirm this is what they are looking for and they suggested we send it on to the County Attorney for review. We forwarded it to the Attorney and have not heard back. Three copies of the agreement are presented for signatures by the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.
- T. Ferry
  - Ferry updated the Board on his attendance at the Water Quality Symposium from March 13-16.
  - Working on no-till equipment maintenance.
  - Soil Group Worksheets have begun to taper off.
- K. Sumner

- Sumner assisted Middletown's Common Council with their stormwater permit. The annual reporting period for this is in March. We supplied them with a list of reportable items that we completed in the realm of stormwater in Orange County. This helps them show that they complied with the permit requirements.
- Climate Resilient Farming Grant Round 3 Proposal was submitted. It was for the Celery Avenue ledge project with the Gantz brothers as the participants. We are expecting it to be announced in April.
- The next Ag NPS Grant Round Application should be released soon.
- There was discussion regarding building a milk processing plant in Orange County. Sumner suggested this is something the Ag & Farmland Protection Board be involved with. The AFPB formed the Ag Plan Implementation Committee which both Sumner and K. Morris, OC Planning Department, are on. The next meeting is scheduled for this Thursday. Wright suggested that Kemnitz email the Board and ask to be put on the agenda.
- Harmful algal blooms - The 1<sup>st</sup> summit was held in New Paltz on February 27<sup>th</sup> and both Sumner and Ferry attended. The state has their own consultants that are preparing action plans for each of the water bodies that were identified. One of them is the Middletown reservoir land. We still have not heard from the consultants hired to do the plan. Sumner will keep the SWCD Board updated.
- Mt. Hope Training Center – Located next to the Middletown reservoir. Keeton has been stopping out to see them and suggesting they contact our office. Sumner did speak to a manager but not the owner. If he does call Sumner, and has interest, we will see if we can come up with state money and explore whether other local source of funding can be identified for the local match to do some project work on the farm, since it is in the HAB target watershed.
- Sumner had a meeting with a solar company out of Canada. There was discussion on combined use where agriculture can still go on around where the panels are placed. But the companies pick the easiest spot to put the panels which means they use up the good farmland.
- Sumner gave a report on the wallkill flood project at the Vegetable Growers Meeting.
- Spending a lot of time writing the Monhagen Watershed Plan. The goal was to get this completed by spring.
- The District would like to do a stream clean-up like we did behind Shop Rite Plaza on Dolson Avenue in Middletown. We want to move further upstream behind the businesses such as the bagel shop, muffler shop, etc. The biggest concern is all the trash behind Dollar General's parking lot. They do not have their dumpster in an enclosure.
- Sumner and Ruszkiewicz went to the NYS DEC last week to talk about the tree cutting below Celery Avenue Ledge. There was a brief discussion regarding possibly cutting half of the trees that are there. Sumner will lay out a representative area and flag the trees to be cut and the DEC will send their forester out to do an analysis on how much of the canopy will be removed. If they are in agreement it can move forward.
- Sumner received several inquiries from CFI's bond company which were forwarded to the Orange County Law Department.
- Sumner has brought up the expansion of the Wallkill Maintenance Project numerous times. At the last Ag Plan Implementation Committee Meeting he had brought it up with R. Schreibeis and D. Church in the room. He also followed up with County Law after the last Wallkill River/Black Dirt Region Flood Mitigation Steering Committee to get an update on the status of efforts to expand formal maintenance on the Wallkill downstream from County Route 37.
- Guy Jones called Sumner on Friday. By Jones's description, he is the only farmer operating on substantial acreage in the Chester muck. He said their tax bill went up 40% this year. And his understanding is that it is due to an assessment in regards to the pumping plant. Sumner asked K. Morris to put this on the Ag & Farmland Protection Board Agenda. Sumner may reach out directly to DPW this week. The other issue Jones has is a big development up on a hill that drains into the Chester black dirt. Sumner had suggested that he talk to Village Engineer, which he did, and nothing has been resolved.
- When Sumner was at the Summit in New Paltz he ran into James Kulisek, County Legislator, and he inquired about getting on our Board.
- J. Clifford from the State Committee emailed Sumner let him know that Ferry did a good job giving his presentation at the Water Quality Symposium.

## INTERAGENCY REPORTS

- J. Heller (NRCS)
  - USDA is moving forward with FPAC Farm Production and Conservation.
  - Moving along with contracts – 2019 EQIP applications now open. The application deadline is June.
  - Conservation Easements are moving well. There are five in Warwick.
  - Growing organics brochures are now available. A copy was passed around.

## OLD BUSINESS

Wallkill Flood Project – Mentioned the permit modification request sent to NYS DEC to reduce planting density.

Quaker Creek – it looks like approval of funding for tree removal in the lower reaches will come up for a Legislative vote in May. The channel improvement work on upper Quaker that has been preliminarily discussed will require additional study and discussion with landowners. Clearance from Army Corp of Engineers might be necessary. Need something growers are in support of. There are very few trees in this reach which means no bat issues. It's a class C stream which means no NYS permits are needed to disturb the banks. It's also not an issue for winter raptors if work is done in the summer. It can create flood protection and a buffer on each side of the creek.

(J. Heller left the Meeting at 10:45 AM)

Sumner submitted the Flood Plain Development Permit to Town of Wawayanda in preparation for the Quaker project and was told it may take a few weeks to hear back.

Wallkill Floodplain Bench Phase I Subdivision – Town Attorney indicated he is OK with the Flood Control Lands Use permit we hold as evidence of acceptable access to the proposed new parcel. The Attorney will forward to Town engineer for his review/sign-off.

## NEW BUSINESS

The NYS DEC is expected to impose a new regulation requiring tires, including those used to weigh down trench silo covers, to be cut in half or have large holes drilled in them to avoid trapped water and control mosquito breeding. The new regulation starts on May 2, 2018. Discussion followed. The SWCD is looking for alternatives to help farmers avoid the need to cut or drill these tires. One idea is to replace the tires with modern stored feed covers that do not require the use of tires. These new covers are weighted down on the seams and the edges. Sumner brought this up to the County Ag Protection Plan Implementation Committee and they thought it was a good idea.

(J. Heller rejoined the Meeting at 10:55 AM)

We are in the process of surveying dairy farmers to see how many tires they have. \$200,000.00 may be enough to dispose of the tires and to buy new covers. Approximately 1,800 tires can fit in one truck load for \$2,000.00. Approx. 15 surveys have already been filled out and we will mail out surveys to the rest.

**2018-3-4 Wright made the Motion, seconded by Ruskiewicz, to go into Executive Session at 11:08 AM to discuss employment history of one or more employees. All in favor.**

**2018-3-5 On a motion by Wright, seconded by Keeton, the Board came out of Executive Session at 11:40 AM. All in favor.**

The next **MEETING** is scheduled for **Monday, April 16, 2018 at 9:00 AM.**

**2018-3-6 The Meeting adjourns at 11:45 AM on a Motion by DeBlock, seconded by Kemnitz. All in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Christine DeGroot, Secretary to the Board