Joel Diemond called the meeting to order at 3:35 PM and asked if there were any changes or additions to the minutes from January. Warren Temple Smith motioned to approve the minutes as written, and Hans Klingzahn seconded. The minutes were accepted without change.

**Commissioner’s Report – Kealy Salomon**

Kealy reported that Betty Wise has sent a letter of resignation from the Planning Board and that Randall Williams has expressed an interest in continuing as a member. The County Executive is aware of the vacancy, and we hope in the next few months to have it filled. The Legislative Chairman has also reappointed Jerry Hutchings as the Liaison to the Planning Board.

As stated in the agenda, the subject of this meeting is the Partnership for Manageable Growth. The County Executive is interested in renewing the investment to support agricultural business and getting the infrastructure portion underway as well. Therefore, we asked land conservancies and communities to give us any proposed projects that are ready to go forward so we could get a sense of the demand. We hope the State will also be putting out an RFP soon, so other projects may be seeking funds. At this
meeting, we will hear about projects that are prepared to move forward and some that are waiting for the right opportunity to seek funding.

Noela Hooper explained that there are two applications that are considered ready for County review. The funding is secured, thanks to Scenic Hudson and Dutchess Land Conservancy (DLC) having obtained the requisite federal and municipal money. Noela introduced Cari Watkins-Bates from Scenic Hudson and Art Collings from DLC, who have done a lot of groundwork putting the applications and funding together and are here to describe the two projects and ask the County to support both projects.

Although communities that have farmland protection programs in place were contacted, none have future projects currently in the works. Winnakee Land Trust has also been working on Open Space projects, but had no completed farmland projects ready at this point.

Binders were distributed containing each application and all the associated documentation. The Board members were asked to review them prior to a site visit next month.

**Cari Watkins-Bates – Scenic Hudson**

Cari explained why these projects were considered ready for County funding and what could be found in the applications under each tab:

Tab 1 – Project Summary
Tab 2 – Maps and Photographs
Tab 3 – Project Budget
Tab 4 – USDA Commitment, Resolution from Town of Red Hook/Scenic Hudson Board of Directors
Tab 5 – Full Environmental Assessment
Tab 6 – Monitor Agreement – DLC
Tab 7 – Support Letters
Tab 8 – USDA Primary Funding Application

Cari gave a brief overview of each of the projects, showing various maps and photos identifying resources and explaining the importance of these farms to the County.

**KLOSE FAMILY FARM (ECHO VALLEY FARM):**

- 105.42 Acres
- Situated within the core of agricultural land in the Red Hook “Breadbasket”
- Located within 3,400 acres of protected farmland
- Sheep farm, hayfields rented to local farmer, CSA lease for vegetables for distribution
- Along Sawkill, a tributary to Hudson River and a Class B Stream
- 60 acres are Zone I Aquifer Recharge Area and 25+ acres are Zone II
- Designated as a conservation area and important bird area
- Contributes to economy and quality of life as well as scenic beauty
- Includes 50 acres of Prime, Prime Where Drained and Farmland of Statewide Importance

Estimated Project Cost: Total: $666,590 ($632,520 acquisition cost plus $34,070 project-related costs)

Primary Funding from USDA Farm and Ranchland Protection Program: $316,260 (50% of acquisition)

Additional Acquisition Funding, Town of Red Hook: $158,130 (25% of acquisition)

**Amount of Matching Grant Request from Dutchess County:** $158,130 (25% of acquisition)
Joel noted that maintaining farm support services is easier when the farms are adjacent to each other or in the same area. It aids in the vibrancy of a community. He mentioned that maintaining the agricultural businesses also provides incentive for someone contemplating a new farm services business. Cari agreed that operating near a place that will always be a farm provides security for farm operations.

Jerry Hutchings inquired as to the timing of the funding and Cari said the performance standard is usually that the funding should be used within 18 months. He also asked what would happen to the project if the County did not contribute the 25%. Cari replied that the Scenic Hudson Board was willing to commit to the match based on the understanding that they would seek other funding.

Michael Dupree inquired as to whether the Planning Board would be the lead agency; and Kealy said that for purposes of spending County funds, it would be the Dutchess County Legislature.

Colleen asked about the hearings. They would be at the DC Legislative Board meeting; PMG projects are usually assigned to the Environmental Committee. Red Hook has approved its share of the funding and completed its own SEQRA review.

Before Cari spoke about the second application, Noela distributed a criteria sheet based on the enabling legislation. It contained abbreviated notes about the project based on information included in the application to help Board members prepare for rating the project after the site visit. Criteria include ratings for Local and Regional Support, Unique Opportunity or Threat, Resource Protection, Agricultural Significance and Development Pressure.

**KESICKE FARM CATTLE, INC.:**

- 72.42 Acres
- Identified as a “Gateway” Farm for Village of Red Hook in the Town’s Community Preservation Plan along with the abutting 150-acre Kalina Family Farm, which is operated by the same owner
- Located within 3,400 acres of protected farmland
- Over 45 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance as defined by USDA
- Newly-constructed farm market for raising grass-fed angus, hogs, sheep, chickens, fresh produce and other farm products (eggs, corn, hay)
- 12 acres of Class 2 wetlands, which are part of a 37-acre DEC wetland complex
- 30 acres are part of a Zone I Aquifer Recharge Area and 4+ are a Zone II Recharge Area
- Farm offers employment, contributed to economy, quality of life and scenic beauty

Estimated Project Cost: Total: $448,306 ($420,036 acquisition cost plus $28,270 project-related costs)
Primary Funding from USDA Farm and Ranchland Protection Program: $210,018 (50% of acquisition)
Additional Acquisition Funding, Town of Red Hook: $80,009 (19% of acquisition)
Additional Acquisition Funding, Scenic Hudson Land Trust: $50,000 (12% of acquisition)

**Amount of Matching Grant Request from Dutchess County: $80,009 (19% of acquisition)**

This property had been approved for a 30-lot subdivision, but it was not built; and since the zoning has changed, subdivision would require a new approval.

In response to Joel’s question as to why Scenic Hudson has contributed funding to this project, Cari said they were able to secure money from another source, specifically for Kesicke Farm Cattle, Inc.
Noela said the next step will be a site visit to each farm. It is important to have as many Board Members as possible on the visits. If there is an on-site vote, we would need a quorum. If not, the Board would reconvene for a short meeting to vote. A quorum is not needed for the site visits if no action is taken.

Dates were discussed for a site visit in early April, and Colleen offered her office for a meeting to vote. Unless there is a problem setting up the visits, the Board decided to meet at the municipal parking lot in Rhinebeck at 3 PM on April 3rd. Cari will confirm the details and get back to Noela. The Board will receive the meeting information once it is confirmed. [Note: the meeting was rescheduled for April 1st.]

Noela distributed a summary of the two applications plus the four potential projects submitted by Dutchess Land Conservancy as well as a packet of information prepared by DLC regarding the four projects. She commented that they represent a great mix of locations, uses and opportunities.

**Art Collings, Dutchess Land Conservancy**
The four potential projects are located in diverse locations around the County, and each highlights a different aspect of Dutchess County agriculture.

- **Hahn Farm**, Town of Pleasant Valley
  ~101 Acres – livestock, crops, agri-tourism
  ~Estimated PMG investment $230,755

- **Schultz Hill Farms** (Ronnybrook Farm), Town of Pine Plains
  ~327.8 Acres – dairy
  ~Estimated PMG investment $642,588

- **Secor Farm**, Town of LaGrange
  ~103.95 Acres - fruit/pick-your-own
  ~Estimated PMG investment $228,475

- **Betti and Larry Steel Farm**, Town of Milan
  ~88 Acres – CSA operated by a young farmer
  ~Estimated PMG investment $292,650 - $146,325

Each of these properties is located where there are existing farm businesses, and all are different. Most are close to areas where DLC has been preserving land. Joel noted that the diversity in geographic locations is an important factor for the purposes of the Legislative review.

Kealy mentioned that DLC and Scenic Hudson are always talking with landowners, and it is exciting that we have two viable projects and four potential ones in the pipeline; and Joel remarked that he looks forward to the number of farm businesses opening in the County over the next decade – it is a plus for the County as a whole.

Cari said the work they have been able to do was limited because of the lack of primary funding since 2008, although some projects were developed hoping that funding would open up again. Now that the State has once again provided for funding, it will give the land conservancies the ability to develop more projects. There is always more demand than funding. The key over the last five years: projects where development rights have been purchased are often important transfer mechanisms in changes of ownership, making the land more affordable. Joel agreed that the last point Cari made is critical. If you don’t have purchase of development rights, no new farmers can afford to buy land and start a new farm. So this enables the future of agriculture.
Kealy noted that the summary and the estimates of funding requests will be refined, but show the potential level of County involvement. Joel mentioned that these are very high-quality projects and there will probably be others. He noted that if the State and County programs go forward, what actually comes to the Board may be slightly different than the first presentations.

Since no further business was proposed, Michael Dupree motioned to adjourn an Ed Hauser seconded. The meeting ended at 5:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary McFarlane