

PECONIC LAND TRUST



For immediate release

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PECONIC LAND TRUST RECEIVES ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON PROTECTED FARMLAND FROM RUSSELL C. MC CALL

APRIL 14, 2016. SOUTHAMPTON, NY. John v.H. Halsey, President of the Peconic Land Trust, is pleased to announce the donation of additional restrictions, including affirmative farming covenants, on about 29 acres of protected farmland in Mattituck. Mr. McCall, who purchased the farmland from John Elak, Jr. earlier this year, made the gift to the Trust.

“All of us at the Trust thank Russ for his commitment to conserving Long Island’s working farmland. Through multiple conservation tools, the land has been preserved for future generations – boosted by Russ’ decision to not only purchase the land and protect an additional 3.8 acres, but also by adding an affirmative farming covenant, which assures the land will be substantially used for active food production forever more,” said John v.H. Halsey, President, Peconic Land Trust.

"As a landowner and a farmer, I feel an obligation to respect the land and to help ensure, when possible, that it is available for food production farming for future

generations. By applying these additional restrictions on this farmland, our hope is it serves as a draft model for other landowners to use in their preservation efforts," said Russell C. McCall. "This direction for farmland preservation, where land use can be voluntarily specified for future use, is a direction we hope to promote."

About the Farmland and its Conservation History

In 2003, Mr. Elak's parents sold the development rights on about 25 acres of the family's farmland in Mattituck to the Town of Southold. At that time, the Elaks also donated an overlay easement to the Trust on the entire parcel that limited the unprotected portion of the property (about 3.8 acres) to a single residence and a commercial operation, such as a winery. The overlay easement also limited the amount of greenhouse coverage that could be built on the property. Mr. McCall was given an option to buy the property in its entirety (nearly 29 acres) should the Elaks decide to sell in the future.

Recently, Mr. McCall exercised his right to purchase the property. He then sold the residential and commercial rights on the remaining 3.8 acres to the Town of Southold. Once this was accomplished, Mr. McCall donated the affirmative farming covenant to the Trust on the entire 29 acres. The affirmative farming covenant:

- gives the Peconic Land Trust the right to lease the property to a qualified farmer if the property is out of production for 1 ½ years,

- requires that 80 percent of the property be used for food production – the cultivation, growing, raising and/or production of Food and Food Products including all articles of food, drink, confectionary or condiment for humans and animals, and
- restricts the building of non-residential agricultural buildings or structures to 2 percent of the land, and requires written approval for any structures from the Peconic Land Trust.

The affirmative farming covenant has been used by the Trust as part of its Farms for the Future Initiative to assure that protected farmland is available to food production farmers on the East End of Long Island.

About Farms for the Future Initiative

The Peconic Land Trust’s Farms for the Future Initiative includes farmland leases, incubator programs, and sales of protected farmland to farmers, some with additional restrictions that limit non-agricultural activities or support food production farming, designed to assure farmland access and affordability for farmers in the future.

Although the Farms for the Future Initiative is constantly evolving, the Trust started with three primary objectives:

- 1) Explore and refine a new set of conservation tools and techniques that address the issues of farmland accessibility, affordability, and sustainability

- 2) Buy, protect, rebuild and resell farms to farmers
- 3) Develop and expand our Farmland Leasing Program

To learn more about the Trust's Farms for the Future Initiative, please contact Dan Heston, Senior Manager of Agricultural Programs, at 631.283.3195 or DHeston@PeconicLandTrust.org.

About the Peconic Land Trust

Founded in 1983, Peconic Land Trust conserves Long Island's working farms, natural lands, and heritage. Since its inception, the nonprofit Trust has worked conscientiously with landowners, communities, municipalities, partner organizations, and donors, to conserve nearly 12,000 acres of land on Long Island. The Trust's professional staff carries out the necessary research and planning to identify and implement alternatives to outright development. While working to conserve the productive farms, watersheds, woodlands, beachfront, and historic properties of Long Island, the Trust is also protecting the unique rural heritage and natural resources of the region.

The Trust has Stewardship Centers in Cutchogue, Bridgehampton (Bridge Gardens), Southold (Agricultural Center at Charnews Farm and Shellfisher Preserve) and Amagansett (Quail Hill Farm) and its Main Office is in Southampton. *The Trust depends primarily upon private donations to support its conservation work. A common misperception, however, is that the Peconic Land Trust collects and distributes the monies raised through the Peconic Bay Region Community*

Preservation Fund (the CPF is also referred to as the 2% land transfer tax or the Peconic Land Tax). This is NOT the case. The CPF is a public program managed by each of the five East End Towns for the protection of farmland, open space, and community character. For more information about the Peconic Land Trust visit www.peconiclandtrust.org or call 631.283.3195.

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