

## RED HOOK

# Questions raised about proposed inn, horse center

By Mike Mickler

Hudson Valley Newspapers

A proposal for a new inn and equestrian center off NYS Route 199 and Crestwood Road, two miles east of Red Hook ran into procedural problems during a public hearing before the Planning Board Monday.

There continues to be positive sentiment for the plan of Sam and Arleen Harkins to convert 88 acres of the former Fraleigh Farm into the Sunset Crest Manor Inn and Equestrian Center.

However, there was misunderstanding over whether or not the inn would serve the public in addition to private guests and whether or not the public hearing was for a special use permit and site plan approval of an outdoor riding ring

in addition to the inn.

Glenn Brent of Brent Engineering, who represented the applicants, said that public dining was a permitted use under the inn designation and asked the board to grant at least conditional use approval so work could commence inside the existing brick Victorian home.

But Marcella Appell, the Planning Board chair, said that the restaurant usage required separate approval and that it was her understanding that the applicants only sought approval of the private inn. She also said that the proposal required Dutchess County Planning review and, therefore, adjourned the public hearing and tabled any action by the board.

There were few serious issues

**Please see Inn, page A9**

## Inn

Continued from page A1

raised about the inn or riding center by the public. There were questions as to the hours of restaurant operation, the types of "special events" which might occur, and lighting.

The original proposal called for the development of four guest rooms in the upstairs of the manor, originally built in 1825, and a small eight-table restaurant on the first floor.

The equestrian center is envisioned to include stables and an

indoor ring, but for the present only an outdoor 200 feet by 90 feet ring is planned. Local zoning law requires a minimum of one acre per horse, so the center could accommodate 88 horses. There are 42 parking spaces with room for 14-15 more. Two entrance-exits to the site are planned to run off of Crestwood Road.

The public hearing will be renewed with board action on the proposal expected 8 p.m. April 1.

## LETTERS

### Develop Red Hook to keep it rural

An opportunity is coming April 1 to help keep the Town of Red Hook rural. The former Irv Fraleigh farm on Route 199 east of the village is prime development land. Lots of houses could occupy the beautiful pasture and cropland, obliterating the bucolic view and potential for another agricultural business to grace the land.

On that date at 7:30 p.m., the planning board will continue to hear comment on the site plan and special permit for Suncrest Manor Inn and Equestrian Center. What a good idea. We can't think of a better plan to keep the land open and in agriculture. And, as an old-time farmer put it, "Cows (and horses) don't go to school," saving taxes for all.

The adaption from a dairy farm to a horse operation is typical of changes in the agriculture business that are necessary to keep land in farming. Sadly, the days of production ag (where you plant, harvest and sell wholesale) are gone. To make a living on a farm here, we must sell food or services

at the retail level. In many cases that means inviting the public to the farm.

So, whether we agree with every economic decision the owners make in developing their property as a horse farm (a designation protected by the state Agriculture and Markets Department) or not, let's encourage and support their decision to keep it rural.

**Sid & Beth Mead**  
Tivoli