

Town of Farmington Agriculture Advisory Committee

March 10, 2011
Meeting Minutes

Attending: Pete Maslyn- Chair, Royal Purdy, Jim Ochterski, Jim Gray, Don Jones (quorum)
Excused: John Marvin and Doug Payne
Guest: David Degear, Planning Board

Meeting called to order at 7:31 PM

1) Correspondence:

No correspondence.

2) Comprehensive Plan Update Committee referred issues

The Agriculture Advisory Committee was asked to review preliminary recommendations and to provide additional input to the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee (CPUC) on several issues involving agriculture land use and planning.

- a) Review of parcels suggested by CPUC for reclassification on Future Land Use Map from agricultural to residential. The previous consensus was to recommend the specific parcels (west of CR8 and north of Townline Road, vicinity of Brownsville / Bowerman intersection, and all parcels west of New Michigan Road) be retained as agricultural land use classification on the Future Land Use Map. Discussion about the implications of this recommendation, in light of recent support from Conservation Board and Planning Board. For parcels west of New Michigan Road, the Conservation Board indicated they would respect the preferences of the landowners. P. Maslyn brought testimony from the landowners (obtained February 26 and March 9, 2011) indicating they have a genuine desire to keep the property in agriculture use for the foreseeable future. The land is currently under long-term agriculture leases to other farm operations in the area. The Agriculture Advisory Committee recognizes there are hundreds of approved building lots in existing residential areas of Farmington, suggesting a surplus of space for residential development without requiring reclassification of prime farmland for conversion to non-agriculture use. The Town survey of residents supports retention of farmland. Town of Canandaigua personnel have not received notice or intent for residential land use on the areas south of Townline Rd. Town of Canandaigua new Comp Plan Update corroborates that current agriculture land use is preferred in the vicinity. Agriculture Advisory Committee feels it is appropriate to provide a buffer between development east of New Michigan and Town of Victor Open Space plans.

Motion: The Agriculture Advisory Committee recommends to the CPUC that the parcels west of New Michigan Road remain designated as agricultural on the Future Land Use Map. Motion by R. Purdy, second by D. Jones. Vote: unanimous in favor.

- b) Lot size minimum in agriculture zones: Discussion of previous comments. Intent of the Committee is to reduce the potential rate of conversion of farmland resources to non-agriculture use. Motion: Agriculture Advisory Committee supports 40,000 square foot lot

size minimum in Agriculture Zone, changed from current 80,000 square foot lot size minimum. Motion made by R. Purdy, second by D. Jones. Vote: unanimous in favor.

- c) Inclusion of “Cost of Services” language in Chapter 2 of Comprehensive Plan Update. Motion made by R. Purdy, second by D. Jones. Vote: unanimous in favor. The Agriculture Advisory Committee recommends inclusion of the following text in the Comprehensive Plan Update. This paragraph had been deleted, but the research underlying the facts about agriculture land and cost of community services remains valid.

Text recommended for Comprehensive Plan Update Chapter 2 section about Agriculture (page 9):

“The "Cost of Services" study that was conducted in the Town of Farmington using 1990 data analyzed the ratio of taxes and fees paid to the value of services received for three categories of development. For every \$1.00 paid to the Town in taxes and fees by the agricultural community, approximately \$0.72 was received in services (a ratio of \$1.00/\$0.72). The ratio was \$1.00/\$1.22 for the residential sector of the Town, and \$1.00/\$0.27 for the commercial and industrial sector.

Subsequent studies conducted in New York State have strongly affirmed that agriculture land use represents a tax profit to municipalities, whereas residential land use typically represents a tax deficit when public income and expenses are accounted for.”

- d) General discussion of Comprehensive Plan Update process – it has not been as transparent or easy to follow as the Agriculture Advisory Committee desires or expects. Some official input has been in the form of interpersonal e-mail rather than expressed in public meetings; documentation and accountability for input or correspondence regarding revisions to text in any section of the Comprehensive Plan Update has not appeared in official Town records during the last few months.
- e) Future trail development plans expressed in Comprehensive Plan Update: J. Gray advised concern and potential opposition shared by farmers, regarding the oversight and maintenance entity responsible for future trails. There is a track record by some trail management entities that raise liability concerns for farmers, lack of cooperation in shared use of private land, and limitations on normal agriculture operations in the vicinity of trails.
- f) Agriculture Advisory Committee considered the potential for conversion of farmland to residential development south of County Rd 41 and west of State Route 332 to the Post Office plaza area. No formal decisions are pending; the Committee would be willing to consider options that protect the prime farmland on the site while meeting the Town’s goals for residential development closer to the proposed Town Center.

3) Request from Farmington Chamber of Commerce regarding recognition of the agriculture business community.

Agriculture Advisory Committee received a request from the Chamber of Commerce to suggest individuals or events that would appropriately recognize the contributions of farming to the Farmington economy. Two farms were specifically discussed as deserving of recognition – not named in minutes pending Chamber response.

Next meeting: Scheduled for April 21, 2011; 7:30 PM Town of Farmington Hall

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Submitted by J. Ochterski, Agriculture Advisory Committee member