

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board Meeting

March 17, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Ag Board members present via conference call / TEAMS meeting: J. Hoeffner, E. Ruscher, P. Ruszkiewicz, M. Simpson, A. Sorensen, M. Ullrich, J. Wright.

Guests present via conference call / TEAMS meeting: K. Apostolides – OC Farm Market Coordinator, T. Corlett – Senator Martucci’s Office, J. MacLeod – OC Planning, H. Persson – FSA.

Call to order – 7:05 pm.

February Minutes

J. Wright moved to accept the February minutes as presented, M. Simpson seconded, unanimously approved.

Summary of Accounts

J. Wright moved to accept the summary of accounts as presented, M. Simpson seconded, unanimously approved.

Inquiries & Correspondence

J. MacLeod stated that the Ag Board had received a letter from New York State Department of Ag & Markets regarding the “Final Notice of Intent to Undertake an Action within an Agricultural District” for Forefront Power, LLC, FFP in Goshen. There were also two supporting documents with this letter. J. Hoeffner said that the Ag Board should get earlier notice about these projects. E. Ruscher stated that the notification for Ag & Markets comes too late and the applicants are ready to file for permits through the towns’ building departments by the time the Ag Board is aware of the projects. He also said that Ag & Markets should provide the owner name and tax lot ID to reduce confusion in the future. A. Sorensen stated that he will reach out to his main contact at Ag & Markets, Jeff Kehoe. The Ag Board members agreed that a letter from Real Property and from Planning should be sent to Ag & Markets to get the information sooner. General discussion ensued. No further action taken at this time.

Old Business

Annual Agricultural District Review

Discussion ensued about the annual agricultural district review. J. MacLeod stated that the Ag Board has received three applications so far. She stated that she is expecting at least one more application, based on a recent conversation with a property owner. The information packets, including the applications and maps, will be sent out to the Ag Board members as soon as possible. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

Potential Ag Board Member

Discussion turned to the potential new Ag Board member. M. Ullrich stated that she has the three top potential members, based on the Ag Board’s votes. The Ag Board should contact the

top three candidates to see if they are interested in being on the Ag Board. J. MacLeod will draft a formal letter containing information about what the Ag Board members do. The letter should include when the Ag Board meeting takes place and invite them to join the meeting.

The Ag Board has not received a resignation letter from P. Johnson yet. J. MacLeod will draft a letter and J. Hoeffner will talk directly to P. Johnson to get the letter signed. General discussion ensued. No further action taken at this time.

Farmers Market Update

Discussion then ensued about the farmers markets. K. Apostolides stated that the farmers markets are starting up and the managers are asking what the rules will be this year due to COVID. She stated that there is a farmers market managers meeting tomorrow, where she will answer a lot of the farmer market managers questions. She stated that two farmers markets have dropped from the SNAP program and she is not sure why at this time. There will also be a new farmers market in the Town of Woodbury on Route 32. It is not clear at this time if the Museum Village farmers market will be operating this year. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

Other Business

New Public Official

T. Corlett stated that he is attending this meeting to represent Senator Martucci, who was recently voted into office. He stated that Senator Martucci serves western Orange County. He wants to keep the County true to its agricultural history and reach out regarding agricultural issues. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

Cow Disease

M. Ullrich stated that there is a cow disease that has cause pneumonia in some dairy cow herds in western Orange County. She stated that many cows have died, but some of these animals had not been fully vaccinated. It costs a farmer \$80 per animal per year to have their cows fully vaccinated, which is a lot of money for a dairy farm. M. Ullrich stated that she found out about this through a third party and she would rather have the farmers tell Cornell Cooperative Extension directly. J. Hoeffner stated that there doesn't seem to be a common denominator related to this illness. T. Corlett stated that this illness infected four farms and there is testing to find out the cause of the illness. He stated that it might have been brought in from a milk truck. He will bring this issue to the attention of Ag & Markets for their help. General discussion ensued. No further action taken at this time.

Ag Plan Priority Project Implementation Update

The Ag Plan Priority Project Implementation updated has not been completed for this month due to unforeseen circumstances. J. MacLeod will work with K. Apostolides and A. Sorensen to update the Ag Board next month. No action taken at this time.

Meeting adjourned: 7:52 pm.