

**Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board Meeting  
June 19, 2019  
Meeting Minutes**

Ag Board members present: J. Hoeffner, L. DeBuck, D. Church, J. McCarey, M. Simpson, D. Smith, M. Ullrich, J. Wright.

Ag Board members excused via e-mail: J. Sanford, S. Soons.

Guests present: K. Apostolides – OC Farm Market Coordinator, J. MacLeod – OC Planning, G. Stap – Farmer.

Call to order – 5:15 pm.

**May Minutes**

General discussion ensued about the May minutes. L. DeBuck moved to accept the May minutes as presented, J. Wright seconded, unanimously approved.

**Summary of Accounts**

The summary of accounts reflects the payments to the Orange County Post and the News of the Highlands for the advertising for the Ag District review. The summary of accounts also shows an allocation for \$793.65 for printing for farm market rack cards for this year, which the Ag Board members were polled on between the May and June Board meetings. J. McCarey moved to accept the ledger as presented, L. DeBuck seconded, unanimously approved.

**Inquiries & Correspondence**

J. MacLeod stated that the Ag Board received a letter from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets regarding a proposed three mega-watt solar photo-voltaic system within the Town of Mount Hope in Orange County Agricultural District 2. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

J. MacLeod stated that the Ag Board received two letters regarding a final notice of intent to undertake an action within an Agricultural District related to the Legoland project in the Town of Goshen. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

**New Business**

**Stap Farm Dairy Processing**

Discussion then ensued about the dairy processing at the Stap Farm. J. Hoeffner stated that dairy farmers are facing new hurdles going forward every day. M. Ullrich stated that some issues that dairy farmers that are selling their own products face include transportation of their products, shelf space for the products and labelling for the products. G. Stap stated that he works on his parents' dairy farm, which does on farm dairy processing. There is a five-hour process to get the milk from the cow to the bottle. The milk is processed right away and is not held in any holding tanks. The farm can produce approximately 100 gallons in five hours. The cows are fed mostly local feed, but not all local feed. They do also feed the cows some cottonseed from North Carolina.

The milk produced at Stap Farm goes to four Hannaford's stores in Orange County. He said that they have also reached out to Adams, which was more willing to work with them than some other stores. The milk produced at the Stap Farm is competitively priced with other local milk. White milk is \$4.50 for a half gallon and chocolate milk is \$5.00 for a half gallon. K. Apostolides asked if they are willing to go to farmers markets to sell their product and help expand their business. She stated that the Monroe Shoprite carries Vreeland milk after the farm's milk was sold at the Monroe Farmers Market. She said that the farm has become so successful that it no longer goes to the farmers market. J. McCarey stated that he would like to see the Staps test their milk out at one or two farmer markets. G. Stap said he does not think this is an option at this time because there is not enough time to have one person off of the farm for a whole day. M. Ullrich stated that some of the farm stands on the back of the farmers market rack cards have refrigeration. She said that maybe the Stap's could considering selling milk some of these farm stands.

The Stap farm has some needs that the farm family is trying to address. The farm needs new labels that have a best by date and a barcode. The farm family also wants to include something like "farmer owned" or "Orange County produced and bottled" on the labels. G. Stap stated that the printing of 10,000 labels will cost \$500 and last for about 6 months. It would cost \$350 to get one to ten bar codes, with a \$150 per year renewal fee. J. McCarey stated that the farm needs to come up with a new name, such as "Happy Cow" or "O.C. Dairy," to attract more business. He stated that if the AFPB logo is on the labels, then maybe the AFPB could help with the cost of the labels. M. Ullrich stated that the Ag Board cannot offer financial support to individual, for-profit businesses. D. Church recommended that the Ag Board pay to produce "locally produced" labels that can be used by all Orange County farmers that meet that description.

The farm also needs a vehicle that provides adequate refrigeration during transport. G. Stap stated that the refrigerated vehicles are very expensive. M. Ullrich stated that it might be possible to use a box truck that is well insulated and run an air conditioner in it all night to get it cold. Then distribute the milk in the morning, while the truck is still cold. She said that there are tags that can be put on the boxes containing the product that will change color if it gets too warm. No action taken at this time.

## **Old Business**

### **Annual Agricultural District Enrollment**

Discussion ensued about the annual agricultural district enrollment. The County Legislature unanimously approved the inclusion of the Richardson Barnett property, in the Town of Chester. The County Legislature approved the Spinelli property, in the Town of Newburgh, with a split vote. Some neighbors complained about the proposed inclusion of the Spinelli property into the County Agricultural District because they did not want a Christmas tree farm near their properties. General discussion ensued. No further action taken at this time.

### **Ag Plan Implementation and Farmers Markets**

Discussion turned to the Ag Plan implementation and the farmers markets. K. Apostolides stated that the advertising for the farmers markets is progressing this year. She stated that some SUNY Orange students have designed some farmers market posters that will be posted throughout the county. The Ag Board members agreed that the AFPB logo should be on the posters in the future. K. Apostolides stated that there are two versions of the farmers markets rack cards that have been created. One of the versions will be printed soon to be distributed, since the Ag Board members were polled between the last Ag Board meeting and this month's meeting and voted to pay for the printing of the postcards for this year. K. Apostolides stated that Orange County Tourism is also willing to help with the agricultural advertising.

K. Apostolides stated that there has also been an effort to move forward with the dairy study. There will be an effort to contact the dairy farmers to find out what they want. The total cost of this project is \$48,000. The Ag Board allocated \$8,000 for this project. The Orange County IDA had allocated \$20,000 toward the study, but decided that it is no longer allocating the \$20,000 it previously agreed to. D. Church stated that the IDA could be asked to allocate the money again. The Orange County Legislature was also asked to allocate \$20,000 toward this study, but has not approved this allocation yet.

D. Church mentioned that K. Apostolides's contract is over. He stated that the Ag Board has two options. The Ag Board could re-up for another \$5,000 contract or go to bid for a longer contract with more money. M. Ullrich recommended doing a fuller contract, such as \$12,000 for the next 12 months. D. Church stated that alternatively, the Ag Board could do one more re-up, then do a fuller contract later. General discussion ensued. J. Wright moved to allocate \$2,500 for K. Apostolides to continue her work for 200 hours over the next two months, D. Church seconded, unanimously approved.

M. Ullrich moved to have the AFPB work on a proposal for an open bid for a consulting position to implement the Orange County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan for one year, starting in the late summer or early fall, paying \$12,000, which can have up to two one year extensions, pending available funding, J. Wright seconded, unanimously approved. D. Church will bring the updated specs to the July AFPB meeting.

## **Other Business**

### **Maplewood Warmbloods Farm**

Discussion then turned to recent work at the Maplewood Warmbloods Farm, in the Town of Wallkill. D. Church stated that there has been significant excavation at this site. He noted that it does not have enough silt fencing and that the farm is near the Wallkill River. M. Ullrich stated that the owner needs to provide a SWPPP, even if it is in the Ag District. She stated that we don't need good agricultural soil to be sent down the Hudson River. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

### **Tire Removal Project**

Discussion then ensued about the tire removal project. J. Wright stated that the tires are being picked up from some of the farms now. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

### **Farm Labor**

Discussion then turned to the farm labor bill. M. Ullrich stated that the M. Ullrich stated that it passed in the Assembly today, but the vote for the House of Representatives still needs to be done. She noted that there would be a 60-hour work week limit for farm laborers if this bill gets passed. Anything over that would be considered overtime. She stated that this bill would also change the farm worker housing rules by requiring all housing to be checked. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

### **Real Estate Transfer Tax**

Discussion then ensued about the real estate transfer tax. D. Church stated that at this time the State is only willing to considering a real estate transfer tax for Chester and Blooming Grove since they are the only communities that are clearly on board with this tax. He stated that the County will probably not get support from the State since only two Town Supervisors have directly contacted Senator

Skoufis about creating a real estate transfer tax. General discussion ensued. No further action taken at this time.

#### Ag Board Member Status

J. Sanford sent a letter to the Ag Board announcing his resignation from the Board. The Ag Board members agreed that the Ag Board should send J. Sanford a thank you letter for his service. They also agreed that they need to identify another possible member to fill his vacancy. Any potential applicant will need to submit a written request to be on the Board. The Board members agreed that Phil Johnson could be a possible Board member, but he would need to send an e-mail, at a minimum, expressing his interest by July 1 or by the next AFPB meeting. D. Church stated that he will call Phil to let him know. If the Board does not receive a response from Phil, then it should move on to other potential Ag Board members. No further action taken at this time.

Meeting adjourned: 7:25 pm.