

**Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board Meeting**  
**June 21, 2023**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Ag Board members present: L. DeBuck, S. Soons, P. Ruszkiewicz, D. Smith, A. Sorensen, M. Ullrich, P. Wiley.

Ag Board members excused via phone: J. Wright.

Guests present: K. Apostolides – OC Farm Market Coordinator, N. Lartey – Cornell Cooperative Extension, R. Lemus Gaiza – Cornell Cooperative Extension, J. MacLeod – OC Planning.

Call to order – 7:13.

**May Minutes**

P. Ruszkiewicz moved to accept the May minutes as presented, S. Soons seconded, unanimously approved.

**Summary of Accounts**

There were no changes to the summary of accounts. However, L. DeBuck asked how the money allocated for the “Animal Processing Logistics Program” since someone else will be able to coordinate between the farmers and the meat processing facilities. M. Ullrich stated that she thinks D. Llewellyn will be asking the Ag Board for some money when he applies for the next round of grants in October. The Ag Board might be able to use some of the money allocated for the “Animal Processing Logistics Program” for this purpose. L. DeBuck asked if the Ag Board should direct some money toward this now or wait until October. M. Ullrich stated that the Ag Board should leave the money as it is at this time. General discussion ensued. P. Ruszkiewicz moved to accept the summary of accounts as presented, P. Wiley seconded, unanimously approved.

**Inquiries & Correspondence**

J. MacLeod stated that the Ag Board received a letter from the New York State Department of Ag & Markets regarding a final NOI “to Undertake an Action within an Agricultural District, New Leaf Energy, 111 Owens Road Goshen Sites 1 and 2 in the Town of Goshen, Orange County Agricultural District 1.” The Ag Board recognized that it received the letter. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

The Ag Board also received a copy of the Regional Food System Partnership Program (RFSP) application that Glynwood had completed for the last round of funding for its program. K. Apostolides stated that Glynwood’s application was approved last year. M. Ullrich stated that the Ag Board could provide Glynwood some money for the match for this program during the next grant round. This could be from the \$10,000 that the Ag Board had previously allocated for the “animal processing logistics program.” However, Glynwood would have to have someone else provide some money for the match, as well, since the Ag Board would not be able to provide the entire amount of money that would be needed for the match. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

J. MacLeod stated that the Ag Board also received an e-mail from Kelly Bradley, from the Orange County Legislative Offices, stating that the Town of Wawayanda Assessor, Heather Shields, and the Town of Wawayanda Supervisor are against putting a property into the Orange County Agricultural District. This property was the A. Nina Wabnig-Wishe property. L. DeBuck stated that the Ag Board

had already recommended adding this property to the Ag District. P. Ruszkiewicz stated that the Legislative committees have also approved of adding this property into the County Agricultural District. The Ag Board members agreed that this is a moot issue since the Town did not respond with its concerns about this property in the timeframe that it was given to respond. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

J. MacLeod stated that the Ag Board also received a thank you letter from the Newburgh Urban Farm and Food Initiative (NUFFI) for its sponsorship of the Annual Urban Farming Fair that was held on April 29. The letter also invited the Ag Board members to its "Day on the Farm" event on June 24 from 12:00 to 4:00. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

## **Old Business**

### **Agricultural Plan Priority Project Update**

Discussion ensued about the agricultural plan priority project update. N. Lartey works with new farmers to educate them. He helps new farmers get grants for food safety so they can learn how to safely handle the food. He also helps new farmers create business plans that look at the markets, look at potential employees, and look at the soils through soil testing. He also helps them find land that they can lease or buy for their farm operations. He stated that there is a website, [nyfarmlandfinder.org](http://nyfarmlandfinder.org), that can help farmers find farmland to lease or buy in New York State. M. Ullrich stated that there are about 20 properties on this website in Orange County at this time. N. Lartey stated that Cornell Cooperative Extension ([cceorangecounty.org/ag-environment](http://cceorangecounty.org/ag-environment)) and Dairy One (<https://dairyone.com/services/soil-laboratory/soil-analysis/>) can help to identify soil types and if the soil at a site is good for agriculture.

N. Lartey stated that there are two programs that can help new farmers, the Good Agricultural Practices (GAPS) program and the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) program. He stated that the GAPS program focuses on produce safety and maintaining a clean facility. This program requires a lot of documentation. The farmer must test the production water and keep records for sanitation. With this program, someone checks the property to ensure cleanliness. If there are employees, there needs to be an employee breakroom and the bathrooms must have soap or hand sanitizer readily available for the employees. FSMA does audits of the farm. The health department or Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) can help farmers meet the health requirements.

A. Sorensen asked what kind of new farmers N. Lartey sees. N. Lartey stated that he works with new farmers that have one or more years of operational experience. M. Ullrich stated that CCE gets the Wharton MBA type of farmer that does not know what they are getting into and are in above their heads. Then there are the back-to-the-earth types of farmers that do not have a customer base and think they can get more money for their products than they will. Finally, CCE sees farmers from other countries that do not get the regulations that apply to farming in New York. L. DeBuck asked if CCE works with next generation farmers, too. N. Lartey stated that CCE works with next generation farmers to create transition plans. M. Ullrich noted that next generation farmers are not considered new farmers because they already have the farm equipment, farm buildings, knowledge, and family support that new farmers do not have. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

### **Farmers Market Update**

Discussion turned to the farmers market update. K. Apostolides stated that that the sales at the farmers markets have been decent this year. However, the Goshen farmers market is getting away from the farm products and is having more other things. M. Ullrich stated that this is a good way to kill a farmers market.

K. Apostolides stated that the work is progressing on the development of the scavenger hunt. There is a volunteer that is designing the scavenger hunt card. The scavenger hunt will start the first full week of August and go to the end of September. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

### Farmer Gathering at Otisville Fair

Discussion then ensued about the farmer gathering at the Otisville Fair. S. Soons stated that Commissioner Ball is coming down to the Otisville Fair on Saturday, July 29, at 11:30 a.m. Therefore, the farmer gathering will be a lunch on that day at 12:00. She is asking that the Ag Board pitch in for food vouchers for the farmers gathering. S. Soons stated that she will let the Ag Board know how much will be needed for the food vouchers at the July Ag Board meeting.

Several people have been trying to brainstorm how to get people to mix with each other at the farmers gathering. One option could be to reserve some tables for the farmer event. L. DeBuck asked if state officials will be invited to this event. M. Ullrich stated that they will be invited. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

### Agricultural Bus Tour

Discussion then turned to the agricultural bus tour, which is scheduled for September 22. This year, the tour may be in the Montgomery area. However, the details are still being worked out. The Ag Board discussed sponsoring some of the cost of the bus tour and indicated that it has allocated \$1,000 in previous years. General discussion ensued. M. Ullrich moved to allocate \$1,000 for some costs of the September 22 agricultural bus tour, P. Ruskiewicz seconded, roll call – L. DeBuck – Aye, S. Soons – Abstain, R. Minkus – Absent, P. Ruskiewicz – Aye, M. Simpson – Absent, D. Smith – Aye, A. Sorensen – Aye, M. Ullrich – Aye, P. Wiley – Aye, J. Wright - Absent, motion carried.

### Other Business

#### Bountiful Harvest Celebration

M. Ullrich stated that Cornell Cooperative Extension will be having its Bountiful Harvest Celebration on Friday, September 29, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Education Center & 4-H Park. She distributed invitations and informed all of the Ag Board members that they are invited to attend. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

Meeting adjourned: 8:40 pm.