

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board Meeting
July 17, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Ag Board members present: J. Hoeffner, L. DeBuck, D. Church, J. McCarey, D. Smith, S. Soons, J. Wright.

Ag Board members excused via e-mail: M. Ullrich.

Guests present: K. Apostolides – OC Farm Market Coordinator, J. MacLeod – OC Planning, K. Morris – OC Planning, R. Schreibeis – OC Executive's Office, K. Sumner – OC Soil & Water.

Call to order – 5:22 pm.

June Minutes

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

Summary of Accounts

General discussion ensued about the summary of accounts. D. Church stated that the County now requires three quotes to print the rack cards because the printing is viewed as a cumulative cost. Furthermore, the Ag Board would have to go through Focus Media to get the farm market rack cards printed. Focus Media would get a commission on the work to be done, resulting in an increased price or a reduced number of rack cards. The \$800 that the Ag Board allocated for the farm market rack cards could buy $\frac{3}{4}$ of the cards originally anticipated; thus, the Ag Board could print 7500 cards. L. DeBuck stated that the Ag Board needs to be more proactive next year to get the farm market rack cards completed earlier in the year. He noted that even if the farm market rack cards are ordered now, it would be August before the rack cards are distributed. The farm market rack cards should be out in the early spring next year or they shouldn't be made. J. McCarey recommended cancelling the printing of the farm market post cards this year because it is already late in the season. The Board members asked how early the farm market post cards could be ready to go out next year. K. Apostolides stated that the earliest that accurate farm market information is available is the end of April, so it would be shortly after that. K. Apostolides and S. Soons stated that they also researched advertising through the internet and/or social media. J. McCarey moved to cancel the printing of the farm market rack cards and to use the \$800 for cable or internet advertising, S. Soons seconded, unanimously approved.

Further general discussion ensued. L. DeBuck moved to accept the ledger as presented, D. Smith 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 two mega-watt solar photo-voltaic system within the City of Middletown and within Orange County Agricultural District 2. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

J. MacLeod stated that the Ag Board also received a letter from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets regarding a final NOI for Nexamp, Inc. Warwick Renewables, LLC in the Town of Warwick an in Orange County Agricultural District 2. The Ag Board asked if there are

agricultural soils on this site. J. MacLeod will check with the planner that works with this town, M. Tennermann, and let the Ag Board know if the site has agricultural soils. General conversation ensued. No further action taken at this time.

J. MacLeod stated that the Ag Board also received a copy of Orange County Legislature Resolution No. 192 of 2019 authorizing the inclusion of certain real property in Orange County Agricultural Districts Nos. 1 and 2. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

D. Church stated that he received an e-mail today from Bob Somers inquiring about the proposed Borrego solar array in Montgomery. NYSERDA revoked the NOI for this project and he needed to know the current status of this project with the Town. J. MacLeod is looking into that at this time. No further action at this time.

Old Business

Annual Agricultural District Update

Discussion turned to the 2019 annual agricultural district update. D. Church stated that the application for the Spinelli property became controversial due to an issue with a neighbor. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

Ag Plan Implementation Update – Priority Project 8

Discussion ensued about the implementation of Priority Project 8 of the ag plan. K. Sumner stated that multiple things have been completed to meet the goals of Priority Project 8, including the tree thinning near Pellet's Island and the tree and debris removal at Quaker Creek. He noted that a transport bridge was also removed to reduce flooding. Some of the ongoing projects include the creation of a floodplain bench along the Wallkill River and the tree management and expansion of the maintenance area between Maple Avenue and Route 17M. Proposed projects include (1) the Quaker Creek channel improvement, (2) the expansion of the Wawayanda Channel / Quaker Creek maintenance area from the Wallkill River confluence to the Village of Florida, (3) the implementation of the Celery Avenue Ledge modification, and (4) the expansion of the Rutgers Creek maintenance area from the Wallkill River confluence to Lower Road. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

Dairy Feasibility Study

Discussion then turned to the dairy feasibility study. D. Church stated that the IDA decided not to fund its portion of the dairy feasibility study. As a result, there is only \$8,000 allocated to this study from the Ag Board. D. Church wanted to know how the Ag Board wants to proceed. The Board could use the \$8,000 to start the plan or the Board could talk directly to the farmers to save the \$8,000.

J. Hoeffner stated that the farmers are not sure how the plan would really help the dairy industry. He noted that forming another co-op won't help resolve the problems that the dairy farmers are facing. He noted that the question is how to get the product to the customers in a profitable way. K. Apostolides stated that the farmers need to sell to the more local base to be more profitable.

K. Sumner recommended getting P. Johnson actively involved before going any further on the dairy feasibility plan. He stated the P. Johnson might be able to offer some direction on this topic.

D. Church stated that he can reposition the money if the Ag Board decides not to do the plan at this time. However, the money needs to be spent by the end of the year because it is from last year's budget. If the money is not spent by the end of this year, then the Ag Board loses it. General

discussion ensued. The Ag Board members agreed to postpone making a decision about how to proceed until the September meeting. No action taken at this time.

New Business

Marketing Materials – Sample AFPB/OCNY Farm Labels

Discussion then ensued about the sample AFPB/OCNY farm labels. K. Apostolides stated that these labels would be generic, overall, but would have the name of the farm at the top of the labels. The Ag Board members agreed that the AFPB logo should be on the labels. K. Apostolides said that the labels might only be one cent each, but she needs to do more research for the exact cost. J. McCarey indicated that if the labels are bought in bulk, they will be cheaper. He recommended that the labels be made for milk, cheese and yogurt that is produced in Orange County. D. Church stated that there are only three farms in Orange County that are processing and bottling their own milk. He recommended approaching them to see if they are interested in the labels. He said that K. Apostolides should do more research on this and test the idea on these dairy farms. S. Soons stated that some farms already have their own label designs and might not go for a more generic label. She mentioned maybe getting the AFPB logo onto the existing labels, instead. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

Marketing Materials – Request for Match Funding for Canvas Bag Printing

Discussion then turned to the request for match funding for the canvas bag printing. K. Apostolides stated that she met with Orange County Tourism and Tourism is willing to pay for half of the cost for the canvas farm market bags. These bags would get distributed throughout the farm markets. The bags would cost \$2300 for 1,000 bags; thus, it would cost the Ag Board \$1150. D. Church stated that the AFPB could sell the bags to bring the money back into its budget with the approval of the Orange County Legislature. He also stated that the production of the canvas bags might not be considered a printing job and that he would look further into it. Reusable bags are likely to become more popular once the plastic bag ban goes into effect in March 2020. J. McCarey moved to allocate up to \$1,500 for the canvas bag printing with a 50/50 match from Orange County Tourism, S. Soons seconded, unanimously approved.

FFA Kids and Volunteering

Discussion then ensued about the FFA kids and their volunteering. K. Apostolides stated that these high schoolers are volunteering on farms and at some farmers markets. They could go to other farmers markets to help with them. These students have been comparing the cost of farm products at stores versus the cost of comparable farm products at farmers markets. J. McCarey stated that this program is important because it helps to educate the kids. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

OC Tourism Update

Discussion then turned to the Orange County Tourism update. S. Soons stated that OC Tourism is willing to coordinate with the Ag Board with advertising and outreach to promote Orange County agriculture. This could include using social media, such as facebook. They could help to get more people out to the farmers markets. However, they would have to go through Focus Media for any printed advertising. J. Wright moved to shift the \$800 from printing the farm market rack cards to paying for social media advertising, J. McCarey seconded, unanimously approved.

Other Business

Tire Removal Project

Discussion then ensued about the tire removal project. K. Sumner stated that the tires are being collected and fourteen of the farms have had the tires removed already. About twelve of the farms already have their silage coverage tarps. There are six more farms to go. He stated that some of the farmers are helping to load the tires. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

Ag Board Member Status

D. Church spoke to P. Johnson, who accepted the membership on the Ag Board. He will be attending the September meeting. J. McCarey stated that he is resigning from the Ag Board because he is retiring. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

August Meeting

The Ag Board members agreed to cancel its August meeting. The next meeting will be on September 18 at 5:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned: 7:42 pm.