

**Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board Meeting
September 20, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

Ag Board members present: L. DeBuck, S. Soons, R. Minkus, P. Ruszkiewicz, A. Sorensen, M. Ullrich, P. Wiley, J. Wright.

Ag Board members excused via phone: D. Smith.

Guests present: K. Apostolides – OC Farm market Coordinator, J. MacLeod – OC Planning.

Call to order – 7:10.

August Minutes

J. Wright moved to accept the August minutes as presented, R. Minkus seconded, unanimously approved.

Summary of Accounts

There were no changes to the summary of accounts. General discussion ensued. R. Minkus moved to accept the summary of accounts as presented, J. Wright seconded, unanimously approved.

Inquiries & Correspondence

The Ag Board received a resignation letter from Mike Simpson, as he is no longer able to serve on the Ag Board. The Ag Board members discussed the need for two more Ag Board members to fill the vacant seats. Possible candidates included Peter Ewanciw, D. Cole, Garret Stap, and Kasha Bialas. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

Old Business

Agricultural Bus Tour

Discussion ensued about the agricultural bus tour, which is scheduled for this Friday. M. Ullrich stated that the bus is almost full and there is a large variation in the type of people that will be attending. The attendees will meet about 7:30 AM for check-in and a light breakfast at “The Farm,” on River Road between the Villages of Montgomery and Walden. The bus will leave at 8:00 AM to go to Adams Fairacre Farms. From there, it will stop at Crist Bros Orchards and FlowerHouse. The tour will end with a catered lunch at “The Farm.” At this time, there will be a special guest speaker, Cosmos Fitzpatrick of Aden Brook Farms. The tour will end at 1:00 PM. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

Public Officials Meeting

Discussion turned to the public officials meeting. K. Apostolides stated that she reached out to three politicians, Rob Rolison, Pat Ryan and James Skoufis. Only Rolison said that he would be able to attend the public officials on October 10 or October 12. The other two politicians said they would not be available to attend. She asked that J. MacLeod send out invitations for this event to hopefully encourage more politicians to attend the meeting. M. Ullrich stated that the Ag Board needs to officially pick a date. Several Ag Board members were concerned about the short notice of the event and the fact that it is during harvest. L. DeBuck asked if it is possible to wait to have the public

officials meeting in January, when more farmers would be able to attend. K. Apostolides expressed concern that although the politicians have a week off in January, it might not be the same week as last year. S. Soons stated that the Ag Board should solicit information about the best time to meet in January from the three or four most important people that the Ag Board wants at the meeting. General discussion ensued. The Ag Board members agreed to hold the public officials meeting in January. No further action taken at this time.

Ag Plan Priority Project Update

Discussion then ensued about the ag plan priority project update. K. Apostolides stated that there is not much to report at this time, as the remaining entities that should be implementing the plan have not responded. She said that there are only four people that are regularly attending the Ag Plan Implementation Committee meetings. Therefore, there may be a need to reschedule the meetings to another time that is more accommodating to the committee members.

J. Wright asked what the plan is with the slaughterhouse that was supposed to be up and operating in Sullivan County. He stated that a slaughterhouse would help agricultural businesses in this area. This slaughterhouse is only processing chickens right now. A. Sorensen has not heard anything more about this slaughterhouse at this time. M. Ullrich stated that there needs to be more money to expand existing slaughterhouses.

L. DeBuck said maybe the Ag Board should advertise for a part time coordinator to get the animals to slaughter. The Ag Board could allocate \$10,000 of its money toward this position. K. Apostolides stated that she was concerned that anyone that would apply for this position would be really green and inexperienced if the salary is only \$10,000. P. Wiley asked if the Ag Board could provide scholarships to help train people for USDA meat processing. M. Ullrich asked if Dave, at Glynwood, has a plan yet. K. Apostolides reminded the Ag Board that it needs to spend the \$10,000 that was allocated in 2022 for the animal processing logistics program before the end of this year so it does not lose this money. K. Apostolides stated that she could ask Glynwood to send the AG Board a bill for the meat processing program. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

Farmers Market Update

Discussion then turned to the farmers market update. K. Apostolides stated that the scavenger hunt has not had much traction. She stated that some people have picked up the card, but have not filled it up. P. Wiley stated that he has not seen the scavenger cards when he went to the farmers market, so it must not be in an obvious place. J. Wright said maybe some of the vendors at the farmers markets could pass out the scavenger cards, in addition to the farmer market managers. L. DeBuck stated that the farm market managers he has spoken to did not like the scavenger cards because they did not want their customers to go to other farmers markets. K. Apostolides stated that the scavenger cards were the farm market managers' idea.

K. Apostolides stated that she could have some farmers market people pick up farmers market bags. S. Soons stated that people do not always know to get the farmers market bags. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

O'Dell Farm PDR Application

Discussion then ensued about the O'Dell Farm PDR application. A support letter was drafted for this PDR application. However, the Orange County Law Department now has to review all support letters. Initially, the law department was not in support of this letter. However, J. MacLeod did some research to inform the law department that support letters are needed for all New York State

Farmland Protection Implementation Grants Program (FPIG) PDR applications, as indicated in the 2023 Round 19 request for applications document. The presented information led to the law department changing its vote to support the letter. J. Wright stated that the AFPB should not need to prove itself to be able to write support letters. The Ag Board members agreed that it should prime the Law Department about the necessary PDR support letters before they are sent to the applicable law committee.

P. Ruskiewicz indicated that this letter lobbied more than other support letters. J. Wright stated that because of the delay with the support letter, OCLT used its money on other PDR projects. Therefore, the O'Dell farm will not be able to get PDR funding during this funding round. P. Wiley stated that the O'Dells needed to follow the requirements for the PDR, but that they were not following the rules. P. Ruskiewicz stated that the O'Dells should subdivide the property and reapply for the FPIG during its next round. General discussion ensued. No further action taken.

Other Business

Bountiful Dinner

M. Ullrich stated that the Bountiful Dinner is scheduled for Friday, September 29. She stated that CCE needs some things for the raffle baskets. She stated that they need a total of 1200 eggs, as they plan to give each attendee a half dozen eggs. No action taken at this time.

Arm to Farm

M. Ullrich stated that this is a national event that is during the week of October 18. She stated that there will be thirty farm couples from all over the country attending this event. It will be four days long and will include classes and farm tours. No action taken at this time.

Meeting adjourned: 8:40 pm.