

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board Meeting
October 16, 2019
Meeting Minutes

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

Guests present: J. MacLeod – OC Planning, K. Sumner – OC Soil & Water.

Call to order – 5:13 pm.

September Minutes

General discussion ensued about the September minutes. P. Ruszkiewicz moved to accept the September minutes as presented, L. DeBuck seconded, unanimously approved.

Summary of Accounts

General discussion ensued about the summary of accounts. D. Church stated that the budget hearings for next year are coming up and that he put in for a budget of \$27,000 for the Ag Board in 2020. M. Ullrich stated that the new ag census is coming up and that Cornell Cooperative Extension will be updating its “snapshot” and “portrait” brochures. She will probably be seeking some funding for this at the next meeting and she will bring details with her to present to the Ag Board. She expects that it will cost between \$1,000 and \$1,500. The Ag Board members expressed interest in allocating about \$1200 to this.

Inquiries & Correspondence

The Ag Board received multiple correspondences. The Ag Board received a letter from the New York State Department of Ag & Markets regarding “The Town of Wallkill’s Zoning Code and its Application to Maplewood Warmbloods.” The Ag Board also received several letters from the New York State Department of Ag & Markets for NOI’s for some solar installations, including a proposed 2.0 MW solar array in the Town of Wawayanda, a proposed 0.8 MW solar array in the Town of Wawayanda, a proposed 2.0 MW solar array in the Town of Minisink, a 2.0 MW solar array in the Town of Montgomery, the proposed Borrego Solar Systems, Inc. 273 Finchville Turnpike 5.0 MW solar array in the Town of Mount Hope, and the proposed Borrego Solar Systems, Inc. 1343 Rt 52 Walden 5.0 MW solar array in the Town of Montgomery.

Several Ag Board members stated that new buildings should be required to have solar installed when they are built. D. Church stated that the County does not require solar for small projects. However, it has pushed for solar on the roofs of some larger projects that have recently been submitted to it, such as Medline. J. Wright stated that he feels that solar projects should not put their solar arrays on prime agricultural soils. L. DeBuck stated that new houses should have solar on their roofs if the houses are placed for it. J. Hoeffner stated that solar energy won’t be replacing gas power plants anytime soon. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

New Business

Honoring Recently Retired Board Members

Discussion ensued about how to honor the recently retired Ag Board members. The present Ag Board members agreed that the recently retired Ag Board members should receive certificates

acknowledging their service to the Ag Board at the next Orange County Legislative session on November 7 at 3:30 pm. No further action taken.

Award for Judy Rife

Discussion turned to the award to honor Judy Rife for her service to agricultural issues in her years of covering these issues in the local news. The Ag Board members agreed that Judy Rife should also be honored at the next Orange County Legislative session on November 7 at 3:30 pm. No further action taken.

Old Business

Dairy Feasibility Study

Discussion then ensued about the dairy feasibility study. K. Sumner stated that the Ag Board should get the new, young dairy farmers together to see what they would consider doing to keep the dairy industry going before going forward with the dairy feasibility study. He stated that it might be too late to do anything meaningful if the younger farmers are not on board. M. Simpson said that there needs to be an effort to put the dairy farmers on the same page.

K. Sumner stated that any future projects designed to help the dairy industry should have its money go to serve several farmers, not just one farmer. He stated that the dairy products produced in Orange County need to be placed in obvious places at local grocery stores. However, there would have to be the right person with marketing experience to help Orange County's dairy sector. He noted that dairy farmers would have strength in numbers. General discussion ensued.

J. Wright asked how the Ag Board could entice dairy farmers to attend an Ag Board meeting. He mentioned that the meeting might need to be a different time of day since dairy farmers are usually milking their cows when the Ag Board meetings occur. K. Sumner recommended having a meeting at lunch time in mid- to late-November. K. Sumner said he and P. Johnson could talk to the young dairy farmers. They can get a list of farmers to invite from Cornell Cooperative Extension. Several Ag Board members recommended allocating money to pay for a lunch to get the young dairy farmers together. D. Church stated that if the County pays for this lunch, the Ag Board would have to use Steve's Deli. However, he noted that Steve's Deli can deliver the food. J. Wright moved to allocate \$200 for food, from Steve's Deli, for the young dairy farmers lunch, D. Church seconded, unanimously approved.

Proposed Resolutions for Extending Hunting Season and Baiting Whitetail Deer

Discussion then turned to two proposed resolutions related to hunting whitetail deer. The first proposed resolution is "to have New York State DEC extend the whitetail deer hunting season" by three weeks (21 days) to help reduce the whitetail deer population. This proposed resolution will be distributed to about fifteen other organizations in the area for them to make the same resolution, thereby increasing the chance the New York State DEC acts on the resolution. General discussion ensued. L. DeBuck moved to have the Ag Board make a resolution to extend the whitetail deer hunting season by three weeks and to send the resolution to New York State DEC, the state representatives (Assemblymen and Senators), and the Orange County Legislature, J. Wright seconded, unanimously approved.

The second proposed resolution is "to have New York State DEC allow baiting for deer." The proposed resolution would allow "hunters to utilize harvested agricultural crops in a limited and controlled method for feeding wildlife, including whitetail deer during the hunting season." It would require that the food would be scattered. By baiting deer, the DEC would not need as many

employees to enforce the current law, which prohibits baiting for deer. It would also help hunters who are hunting whitetail deer. Thus, there would be a reduction of the deer population and related car accidents, Lyme disease cases, and loss of farmland crops. General discussion ensued. L. DeBuck moved to have the Ag Board make a resolution to allow baiting for deer and to send the resolution to the New York DEC, the state representatives (Assemblymen and Senators), and the Orange County Legislature, M. Simpson seconded, unanimously approved.

Other Business

Synthetic Sod for High School Playing Fields

Discussion then ensued about the use of synthetic sod for local high school playing fields. L. DeBuck stated that the Middletown High School recently replaced the sod at its playing field with a plastic, synthetic turf, rather than with natural turf. He stated that the high schools should not use the synthetic turf because it wears out and will probably end up in a landfill after it is no longer in good shape. Furthermore, it impacts the bottom line of sod farmers in the area since they are not providing the sod for these fields. He noted that Orange County Tourism was in support of the use of the synthetic turf for the Middletown High School because this school sponsors events that create a lot of secondary revenue since people coming to the events stay in nearby hotels and eat at nearby restaurants. The Ag Board stated that it might want to comment on the use of synthetic turf at the local schools. J. MacLeod will research the difference and pros and cons of artificial turf versus natural turf so the Ag Board could produce an informational and/or position paper on this topic. No further action taken at this time.

OC Soil & Water Seeder

Discussion then turned to Orange County Soil & Water's need for a new seeder. K. Sumner stated that OC Soil & Water might ask for some funding to help cover the cost of this, but he is still working on the details. General discussion ensued. No action taken at this time.

CBD

Discussion then ensued about CBD. M. Ullrich stated that there is a bottleneck with the processing of the crops to produce CBD. She stated that there is a conference, titled "What is Cannabidiol Extract and How Does It Work?," coming up for medical CBD on December 6 in Newburgh. There will be a full day program that will be open to medical employees, such as doctors, nurses, and mental health providers. There will also be an evening session that day that will be open to the public. She stated that Cornell Cooperative Extension is working on getting sponsors for this conference. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Annual Dinner

M. Ullrich stated that the Cornell Cooperative Extension Annual Dinner is being held on November 18 and that the Ag Board members are invited to attend, in they want to. The dinner will honor Mike Pillmeier, who was a former member of the Ag Board. General discussion ensued. No action taken.

Meeting adjourned: 6:35 pm.