

Dryden Ag Advisory Committee
August 9, 2017

Members present: Evan Carpenter, Kim LaMotte, Jeremy Sherman, Brian Magee, Steve Foote

Liaisons Present: Craig Schutt, Conservation Board and Jason Leifer, Town Board

Guests: Monika Roth and Debbie Teeter, Cornell Cooperative Extension

The Committee used the list (original text italicized) generated from meeting minutes and member comments, and distributed prior to the meeting, to discuss the Ag Protection Plan. Items that do not have comments attached have already been changed in the plan and did not require further discussion.

Page 2 - the Committee would like this page removed - the reasons are the same as Lansing, Dryden does not have an AG zone and no one on the Committee remembers ever talking about it.

Move the table of content to page 2 or 3. They do not like the order of the document; the first thing should be the table of contents.

The Vision for the future of Agriculture in the Town of Dryden is the same as in the Lansing Plan.

Page 4 - "the remaining farms are concentrated on the best soils which are generally located in proximity to the Villages of Dryden and Freeville" - not true, the best soils are in the valleys following the streams that meander through the town.

Page 4 - the numbers do not add up correctly in various places - on page 4 there is a total of 14,103 but on page 18, an additional 733 acres appear.

Page 5 - the Town of Dryden does NOT have an Open Space Plan. The Conservation Board conducted an Open Space Inventory in 2003.

Page 5 - Feb 2017 minutes - According to the USDA NRCS - the Town has 5000 acres of prime farmland and 34,000 acres of soils of statewide significance.

Page 5 - key findings, first paragraph should be northeastern part of Dryden

Page 6 - the Farmers did not agree to "developing a town-sponsored alternative to the NYS Farmland Protection Program" as a priority recommendation.

Page 9 - It was the intention of the town (as stated in the Agriculture & Markets grant application) to utilize state funding to develop a municipal Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, to review zoning regulations and their benefit to farmland protection, and to support farmers interested in participating in the State's Farmland Protection Program (purchase of development rights). The Committee does not agree with the second part of the sentence and asked that it be removed.

The Committee discussed the inclusion of the highlighted information and their concern that this is suggesting the Town government get more directly involved. M. Roth and D. Teeter explained the PDR process and the fact that this was part of the original application to the State for plan funding. The Committee agreed to leave it in the document.

Page 9 - in February, J. Kiefer asked that the statement “However, there were concerns within the farming community that some parts of the town’s zoning law might be unreasonably restrictive” be backed up with examples. The concern of ONE farmer was the basis for that statement.

D. Teeter went back through the surveys and found that there were several comments about the zoning. Concern from the Committee was that this is an opinion and this document is intended to show how to move forward. Ms. Teeter agreed to put the letter from Ag and Markets and the letter in response from former Supr. Mary Ann Sumner in the appendix as support for this statement.

Page 10 - the Committee asked for the following definition of Agriculture:

AML301: 11. “Farm operation” means the land and on-farm buildings, equipment, manure processing and handling facilities, and practices which contribute to the production, preparation and marketing of crops, livestock and livestock products as a commercial enterprise, including a “commercial horse boarding operation” as defined in subdivision thirteen of this section, a “timber operation” as defined in subdivision fourteen of this section, “compost, mulch or other biomass crops” as defined in subdivision seventeen of this section and “commercial equine operation” as defined in subdivision eighteen of this section. Such farm operation may consist of one or more parcels of owned or rented land, which parcels may be contiguous or noncontiguous to each other.

M. Roth asked why the Committee wanted to use this definition which is narrower than the one provided originally. She was concerned that it might leave out newer forms of agriculture and create a potential problem for future ag entrepreneurs. The Committee did not think that would be a problem.

Page 12 - exchange “swaths” for “tracts”

Page 12 - replace the part that starts with north into Cortland County with... north into the Town of Groton and east into Cortland County and extends south on either side of the Village of Dryden and to the west to the Village of Freeville.

Page 12 - replace “steadily” with “slowly” in the last line of paragraph one.

Page 12 - editorial changes - “It should be noted Dryden is by far the largest town by land area in the county, 55% larger than the Town of Lansing, the next largest town. Dryden has a significant amount of land in State Forests (most notably the Yellow Barn Forest is 1,289 acres and about two-thirds of the Hammond Hill Preserve’s 3,618 acres), steep hilly areas, and Cornell-owned land (3,166 acres) – none of which can be developed for residences.”

Page 13 - Dryden is served by 4 state highways - 13, 38, 366, 392 and 34B and remove **as occurs often in other towns in the county** - a quick look at a Tompkins County road map invalidates this statement.

Page 13 - the wells for the Village are not in service yet. Additionally - what is meant by "... and then is concentrated in and around the Hamlet of Varna". It may be relevant information but doesn't make sense. Also, is it necessary to have all the information about Bolton Point in there? Does it matter that they are generating 2.476 million gallons a day when in the first sentence it is stated that most farms get their water from private wells? That paragraph can be cut down to the basic facts:

Water: Most Town of Dryden residents, including farms, get their water supply from private wells, the quality of which varies throughout the Town. Where municipal water is available, the water supply comes from the Bolton Point Water System, and Village or Town managed water systems. There is very little state certified agriculture district land in any of the Dryden water districts.

Page 14 - "The topography of the northern part of the county and in Dryden is medium elevation with flat areas that are suitable for farming." This is incorrect. Change to something like.... "The topography of the **eastern** part of the county and in Dryden **is defined by rolling hills with wide valleys that are suitable for farming.**"

Page 14 - Soils - the Committee asked in February that Channery, Artcort and Lounsbury soils be added to the list.

D. Teeter stated that Artcort soil has been added as well as Channery which is a subcategory descriptor. Lounsbury is an unknown - neither D. Teeter nor E. Bieber were able to find that kind of soil via either an internet search or in the soils books. Unless someone can find proof of this soil, it is going to be dropped with the assumption that the name was misconstrued from a different type of soil.

Page 16-17 - there is no mention of Virgil Creek which is a major tributary to Fall Creek and responsible for the very large aquifer in the valley in which the Village of Dryden is located and thus where they are drilling new wells.

Page 17 - "A draft document is expected by mid 2017." Since it is mid 2017 and the plan is far from complete, please change this to something like **Public outreach has been conducted and the plan development is on-going.**

In the list of ways that Dryden farms reduce or mitigate source and non-point source pollution - please move the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to paragraph one where you talk about the AEM. Short duration grazing systems and rotational grazing systems are the same things.

M. Roth believes that CREP is a set of practices rather than an official program which is why it was put under the “practices and infrastructure”. Instead of having it in the previous paragraph, the Committee agreed to remove CREP, and the actual practices that are the basis of CREP were added to the list of practices and infrastructure....: buffering of waterways and stream crossings and fencing to keep animals out of the waterways.

CNMP - Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans and Milk House waste disposal were also added to the list.

The Committee added “some of the” to the title of Practices and Infrastructure ... that way they are acknowledging that some practices may have been missed.

The Committee asked that the small maps be removed from the plan since they are attached in the appendix. The maps are small and hard to read within the plan and can be referenced pointing people to the appendix. The Committee agreed that they prefer more graphs/charts and pictures.

Page 17 - in the paragraph regarding Cayuga Lake and the TMDL, C. Schutt asked that it be changed to reflect that phosphorus is the primary concern but nitrogen and sediment are also serious concerns.

Page 19 - land in farms - 2nd paragraph is almost identical to Lansing Plan. Also - who are the “several Groton crop farmers”? please remove “however, there are also several Groton crop farmers from that farm land in the town.” “most typically for dairy livestock, although farmers also reported raising equine, beef cattle and sheep.” And “The growth of diversified farming operations in the town has been slower relative to other parts of the county.” The Committee doesn’t know anyone growing sunflowers and trees so unless Extension has information they are unaware of, please change that. Additionally the last sentence in that category does not make sense. Recommendation is to add “but” between “certified” and “follow”.

E. Bieber asked that some of the “exciting” facts be put in a box so they jump out to the reader - things like the population increase of only 7% while there has been an increase of 11% in the acreage of land owned or rented by farmers and that 25% of the town’s land base is in agriculture.

In the chart - vegetables/fruit - this needs to be adjusted since there are now 2 CSAs - TC3 and Ithaca Organics. Also, there are more than 55 farming enterprises listed which is confusing.

*On page 21 - remove “The three largest crops farmers in the town have no “next generation” in place. The land they work is in the agricultural band mentioned above, but it may be more acreage than the larger dairies can absorb. Some of this land **boarders** the Village of Dryden, which may make it attractive for development.”*

The Committee, D. Teeter and M. Roth agreed that this can be edited or completely removed.

Page 23 - the committee stated several times that they do not see the potential for more direct marketing and thus ask that "Most of the start up farms are locating in the Town of Ulysses, however, there is potential for more direct marketing farming in Dryden given the proximity to populations in the Dryden Village and nearby Cortland." be removed.

Page 24 - 2nd to last paragraph - exchange "absorbed" in lieu of "squeezed"

M. Roth agreed that references to other towns can be removed. She does feel there is more potential for direct marketing and Ag and Markets likes to see this kind of reporting. It might be in the wrong section of the plan - maybe it would fit better in "future opportunities and trends".

There were concerns about whether this might be misleading if someone was considering moving to this area. M. Roth feels that it would be misleading if the person was thinking of farm markets but niche CSA kind of products could work. She asked what can be added to the increase in equine farms? How can the farmers build on the influx of students with animals moving into the area? How can the Town help build that?

E. Carpenter stated that we don't want to force anyone into a certain direction but rather want to be able to help folks imagine and dream and try new areas.

As far as the change from "squeezed" to "absorbed", D. Teeter stated that they are being squeezed. The Committee agreed to simply remove that sentence.

Page 25 - committee asked that this be removed. "Several actions could be considered by the town to help preserve an active local farming community. One is to make rural landowners aware that selling or renting farmland to a neighboring farmer instead of the highest price may help preserve the local farming community. An incentive program that encourages landowners to sell to local farms could be considered. New farming enterprises might be encouraged through similar incentives that connect current landowners with beginning farmers with the goal of ultimately transitioning land to new owners. Creativity and commitment will be needed to secure a future for farming. To realize the vision for agriculture's continuation will require an engaged town agriculture committee and agriculture community, as well as consensus among town officials and the community at large that agriculture should be protected and promoted for the benefit of all"

The Committee has concerns about the Town being too involved in daily farming activities.

D. Teeter stated this would be an overview kind of outreach, but not direct interaction due to the fact that the Town is not aware of what is happening on the daily, intimate level.

E. Carpenter pointed out that we don't want the Town to be providing incentives as that generally means an increase in taxes.

Page 25 - 26 - "There have been various attempts at hosting a farmers market in Dryden but with little success in attracting customers and as a result, farmers tend to drop out when sales are slow. This trend can probably be attributed to the fact that the demand for summer produce is met by the farm stands that offer daily shopping opportunities all season long." Remove this as it contradicts the rest of the paragraph.

C. Schutt said he talked to Kelly (owner of Dryden Agway) who runs the Farmer's Market and she has said that the Market is doing great.

M. Roth stated that she would rewrite this section to make it relevant.

- statement about vegetable and berry growing is misleading. Currently Dryden has a U-Pick blueberry location which is small. That is all. The other U-Picks have failed. Please remove the entire paragraph.

D. Teeter feels that in the past u-picks have been successful and could be again.

Page 26 - "Given the populations in Dryden and Cortland, there may be opportunity for a niche CSA farm if the current operations are not able to meet the demand"

D. Teeter pointed out that almost all CSAs are sort of niche and the group agreed that "specialty CSAs" would work.

As far as the suggestion regarding a survey to determine the need/desire for local foods, that part was removed as it is known that there is a large desire locally for locally produced foods.

Page 26 - the Committee has stated on several occasions that the CSA market is saturated directly contradicting the last statement in the Farming Operations category.

Page 26 - Landowner survey results, 3 paragraph, last sentence "only one said no....." That sentence fragment does not agree with prior statement.

Page 26 - question mark next to "dislike zoning"

Page 26-27 are identical to Lansing - were the same questions asked and the same information gathered? In addition, starting with the first paragraph on page 27, the numbers/statistics are from the Lansing Plan.

D. Teeter has changed that which was about Lansing and has reviewed/checked all of the statistics and questions.

Page 28 - the spacing for the top paragraph is different than the following paragraphs.

Page 29 - Carpenter Farm should be Wide-Awake Farm or indicate that more than one farm was involved in the attempt.

E. Carpenter said that it was actually Wide-Awake Dairy (Evan's), Wide-Awake Farm (his father) and Wide-Awake Holsteins (Gabe Carpenter's) as a group that was

involved. The Committee agreed that this could be eliminated without harming the plan or it should be changed to simply WideAwake Farms.

Page 30 - top of page - Other protected Farms in Tompkins County - the Committee does not see the relevance of this information and suggested it be eliminated.

Page 30 - bottom of page - the text box is not properly placed to the wording got cut off.

Page 30 - “during the 8 year review” - change to “every eight years for a review”

Page 33 - since a new comp plan was passed for Tompkins County in 2015, why is there so much information about the 2004 plan? That should all be changed to reflect the current status.

*Page 33 - last paragraph under TC Comp Plan - “...farmland protection given that work **IS** being done....” And has the county farmland protection plan been passed? You have “to be completed July 2015”.*

Page 34 - the committee does not agree with the last paragraph and has asked that it be removed.

The Committee agreed that with the modern technology and transportation, it is not properly stated. The close proximity is not a big deal anymore.

Page 39 - #5- so should industry/light be permitted in RA or not?

This is a question for George Frantz.

Pages 40-41 - Why is the table of Permitted Land Uses labeled as “for planning use only and not an official listing of land uses”?

This is a question for George Frantz.

Pages 39-42 - formatting - huge space on page 39, followed by the charts, creates difficulty in following the text.

This is a question for George Frantz.

Page 47 - Dryden’s vision statement is the same as Lansing’s? Consequences of Farmland Conversion is the same as in Lansing? There is nothing original in Dryden?
Changed based on the comments made by E. Carpenter at a previous meeting.

Page 50 - Population, Housing Development and Business development can all be concentrated in a simple paragraph since they have all been identified/ addressed previously in the document.

*Page 50 - Ag support businesses - **Lilley’s** Tack and Feed, eliminate the three under value added because they are not using local products to make their finished product, move TC3 Farm to Value Added and add Clarks Sure Fine to Ag Support.*

M. Roth indicated that these lists should be moved to ag description, not in the section about pressures on Agriculture.

D. Teeter stated that these “added-value” businesses are business that are in some way supportive or connected to local agriculture whether they actually use local products or not. The Committee asked for a definition of “value-added” in the plan to ensure the reader’s understanding.

Page 50 - bottom paragraph is needless.

The Committee agreed that this paragraph should stay but with the lists above, it will be moved.

Page 52 - Section C, statement 1 PDR needs ()

Page 52 - why is “plan adoption” on this page? Please remove

Page 52 - Add Section F based on GML to recommend ag member on the Planning Board.

This was added to D. Ensuring Farm Friendly Zoning. The Committee has voted previously to add the actual language from the law. They agreed the language could be added to the appendix while including the statement:

“Appoint an agricultural member to the Town Planning Board, in accordance with GML §271” as bullet c.

*General Municipal Law, Town Law.. § 271. Planning board, creation, appointment
11. Appointment of agricultural member. Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter or of any general, special or local law or ordinance, a town board may, if an agricultural district created pursuant to section three hundred three of article twenty-five-AA of the agriculture and markets law exists wholly or partly within the boundaries of such town, include on the planning board one or more members each of whom derives ten thousand dollars or more annual gross income from agricultural pursuits in said town. As used in this subdivision, the term "agricultural pursuits" means the production of crops, livestock and livestock products, aquacultural products, and woodland products as defined in section three hundred one of the agriculture and markets law.*

As Noted in Minutes but not found in plan:

- *Jan 2017 - The Committee asked for a review of Ag history in Dryden with an emphasis on the past 10-20 years*
- *May 2017 - Monika Roth indicated that there are a large number of acres in Dryden that are used for research - where is that indicated or discussed in the plan and what about the threat to production farms when they have to compete with research farms?*
- *The taxes, the fact that Cornell milk is sold on the same market as private farmers, disease control experiments, etc.*

March 8 - Vision of the future of Ag in the Town - M. Roth asked if the Committee had a vision of the future of ag in the Town.

E. Carpenter – we are down to 3 large dairy farms with a lot of small expanded hobby farms popping up as businesses, like the breweries. What we are trying to accomplish is to be left alone from regulations that would hinder the farmer to develop what they see is the direction that the consumer nearby is going for. We don't want any restrictions or regulations that would restrict the rapid response of the farmers to meet that market. We don't want the farmer to be restricted. If a farm wants to have 2,000 cows, let them because that gets other land that has been growing brush for years back into production. Or a person who wants to put greenhouses on vacant land, let them do it. We have the two ends of the spectrum here in Dryden. The small 40-100 acre farms are disappearing but there are other ag businesses taking their place. We used to have a woolen mill in this Town, we had enough sheep in the town to keep the mill busy. It was good for all of the agriculture in Dryden. The woolen mill got started which led to the increase in sheep in town. They were able to respond rapidly to take advantage of the market.

Goals and Strategies chart - need a key attached with explanation of why some is italicized and who the acronyms are identifying in the responsibility column.

Additional changes include changing Zoning Ordinance to Zoning Law, the addition of a definition of value-added businesses, and on the top of page 50 - should be County of Cortland not City of Cortland. Additionally, Farm Worker Housing has not yet been added to the plan/zoning review.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin A. Bieber
Deputy Town Clerk