

**Dryden Agriculture Advisory Committee
February 14, 2018**

Members Present: Evan Carpenter (Chair), Kim LaMotte, and Brian Magee, and Marie McRae

Liaisons: Craig Schutt, Jason Leifer

Guests: Tyler Beck, Joe Osmeloski, Debbie Teeter and Monika Roth (Cooperative Extension)

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM.

E. Carpenter asked if everyone had had a chance to look over the Ag District recommendations for the solar. Everyone had looked at the comments.

B. Magee reported that the sheep barns at Cornell are being torn down. He was interested in the restoration, and they have no top soil that was left from grading the area initially to restore the ground. The dairy barns, they've sold all of the top soil over the years, so there is nothing left for them to restore the ground. The ground will just be wasteland. E. Carpenter said that most solar installations are not going to require a lot of stripping off top soil, it's driveways and parking areas (if there are sizeable lots). He said that the project that is going on at his property he spoke with Delaware Solar about using existing driveways, improving them and leaving them. That was mapped out for them in advance. D. Teeter said that the County has a document about this subject, she learned about it last week.

M. Roth said that the main issue at hand is going through the document. Last month the comments that had been received were reviewed. She said that the zoning section wasn't thoroughly reviewed by this committee so there are likely to be questions by this committee and the Planning Board. Should this be moved to the appendix or should there be a disclaimer added at the beginning of the section stating that this section has not been endorsed by this committee. The area in question is titled "Zoning Law Analysis and Recommendations". In reality, it's something the state wants you to do and is an on-going process. It's providing information as well as recommendations.

K. LaMotte made a motion to add a short disclaimer to the document in section 5 stating something to the effect "This section was written by George Frantz, a hired consultant, and hasn't been endorsed by the Committee." B. Magee seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

M. Roth said she reviewed the document, and many of the issues regarding zoning still need to be addressed in the future, and many of the other changes were typos or grammatical changes.

A motion was made that all typos and grammatical changes be corrected and any rewording that doesn't change the substance be changed.

Page 7 of the document, last line, M. Roth suggested it be changed to “an effort could be made to inform the non-farming public of regulatory requirements farmers must meet”.

The question was asked as to how many zoning districts there are; nine are listed, but according to the description, there are ten

- 2 Ag districts
- Total of 8 plus 3 that only apply to Varna
- Large scale redevelopment district - not zoned in any one place, but could be if requested

It was decided to check the zoning code and make sure it matches

D. Teeter- Went through the comments received about the Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan document page by page

- Page 7
 1. “Non-farming communities ...” was highlighted. These are findings, so this wouldn’t be the place to make recommendations, so leave as is
- Page 8
 1. “Parts of the law are weak” - seems to make the paragraph more accurate
 2. The next suggested change was to add in parenthesis at the end of the final sentence “Based on farmers surveyed”.
 3. Other changes were recommended by M. McRae to clarify the statement about PDR’s.
 4. “Allowing farmers to sell small lots of least desirable land” - The comment was made in the margin that “there’s no prohibition about farmers selling prime agricultural land”, but after discussing the issue it was decided to leave the line as is
 5. “Potential consequences” - change to “pros and cons” of converting their land to solar installations. It’s an educational process to educate landowners about both sides, not just the consequences. It was also stated that a single industry “Solar” shouldn’t be singled out.
 6. “Update to zoning laws to:” It was stated that the problem probably is regarding the “special use permits”. Ag & Markets agrees that towns may have reason for wanting a permitting process, but it can’t be time consuming, onerous or overly expensive. So it is not unreasonable for the Town to have some ability for the Town to review proposed Ag related activities to judge whether there would be a detrimental effect on the surrounding community. There is a large difference between site plan approval and special use permit approval. It was decided to add “As per Ag and Markets recommendations (supporting document in the appendix)”
- Page 11
 1. Need to add additional meetings and public hearing dates
- Page 21

1. "Solar Installations" - After much discussion it was suggested that paragraph be changed to "There has been growing pressure from large scale solar operations seeking open land to lease." K. LaMotte asked if the guideline from Ag & Markets could be included in the plan. It was decided that it could be added to the appendix and referenced in the document so individuals could have access to that information.

- Page 45

1. The comment was "why single out one industry" - it was decided to remove "including solar installations" and remove the reference "(Map suitable locations for solar farms)"

M. Roth said that she's working with a group of Cornell Law students who are available to the Town for doing some research related to moving the AG & Farmland Plan forward. They could look at many things, like zoning and gather information on what questions you have, and pros and cons of some of the zoning recommendations. They could research TDR's, solar, and research other Town's to see how they've addressed some of these issues. The Committee needs to go through the document and figure out what you'd like researched. They are available for this semester and they need to formulate a question; what are they going to work on, and then they can move forward doing their research. K. LaMotte said it would be interesting if they could compare other areas with more agriculture to here. M. Roth said they could look at the Town's that have farmland protection plans and what their zoning is, what is in their plans, and if it differs from what is being recommended here. She is going to invite the students to the March meeting. She already sent the Ag Plan (with the comments) to the students to look over. She'll be meeting with them next week to get the process started.

D. Teeter said that all Town's from contiguous counties are invited to the Municipal Ag workshop the 17th of March at the Ramada from 9AM-1PM.

M. Roth said that the State has a municipal grants program where if you get to the point you want to hire someone to work on zoning code changes, the Town could apply for a grant to work on zoning code changes to support agriculture.

D. Teeter reported that Open Farm Days will be done again this year. Dryden will probably be done on Sunday. People choose one or two farms to visit and talk with the owners and learn about their operation.

She also reported that on April 14th on the Commons is the Extravaganza. If you are a marketer, that's a good place to be.

M. Roth also reported that Dryden has been selected for a Rural Heritage Tour this fall; it's sort of a combination of old and current stuff (rural living). She said they'd recently met with Rod Howe, from the History Center, and went through all of the things they could think of in Dryden that might be included. Need to identify points of interest (Ag and historical destinations) for the tour. She explained how the tour is being set up.

D. Teeter said they're trying to lengthen the day for Open Farm Day's. For farm markets that are interested, they're suggesting maybe offer a continental breakfast items. This is on a voluntary basis. This happens in August. Since farms can't be visited before noon, people could get an early start by visiting a farm market.

C. Schutt found a map in the Comprehensive Plan (map 4-1 - Natural Constraints to Development) and it talks about slopes and constrained lands and thought it would be a good starting point toward the map they'd been talking about. It was suggested this could be included in the plan.

M. Roth said that for tomorrow night, they're going to try to submit a "cleaned up" copy of the plan to the Town.

The minutes for January 10, 2018 were reviewed and line 54 needs to be changed from "PDR's" to "TDR's" and line 25, the consultant's last name needs to be recorded as "Frantz". A motion was made to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded, and unanimously approved.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Michaud
Deputy Town Clerk