

Dryden Agriculture Advisory Committee

May 9, 2018

Members Present: Evan Carpenter (Chair), Kim LaMotte, Steve Foote, Marie McRae, and Jeremy Sherman (at 7:45)

Liaisons: Craig Schutt, Joe Wilson, Jason Leifer (at 8:35)

Guests: Catherine Wakeman, Debbie Teeter

E. Carpenter called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

E. Carpenter asked if everyone had reviewed the minutes from the last meetings. S. Foote made a motion to accept the minutes, K. LaMotte seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

E. Carpenter asked D. Teeter if she'd received an update on the project the Cornell Students are working on. She said she'd received nothing but next week the students are giving a presentation at which time she'll receive a packet; she will e-mail the information at that time. E. Carpenter asked if the only presentation they were giving was to the professor and none here. D. Teeter said the only town that had gotten a presentation from the students, that she's aware of, was the Town of Lansing. It was mentioned that the student's should have had a longer period of time to do research since they didn't really start on it until sometime in March and graduation is the end of May.

Bi-laws update

E. Carpenter asked if there was any update on bi-laws; ideas, thoughts, etc. D. Teeter asked if anyone was able to find the original document that they'd thought was drawn up years ago. Nothing was found. D. Teeter said she'd resend the sample bi-laws to everyone and they could use them as a starting point. The 2012-2013 Town Board minutes will be reviewed to see if anything can be found regarding the establishment of the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Right to Farm signs update

E. Carpenter reported that the signs will cost \$115.00 each for 20-25 signs (made by KRK Signs) and the Dryden Highway Department will put them up. The signs will be

placed on Rt. 13 at the east and west end, Rt. 38 at the north and south end, Rt. 392 at the east end, Rt. 79 at the east and west end, Rt. 366 on the west end, Rt. 105 at the east end, Rt. 34B on the west end, west end of Dryden Rd, Ringwood Rd, Ellis Hollow Rd, Midline Rd to Irish Settlement Rd, Hanshaw Rd, Bone Plane Rd, Etna Rd, West Dryden Rd. The Town Highway Department will know where the signs should be put up so 20 signs should be sufficient. M. McRae asked where the money comes from and it was stated that it will come out of the Town budget.

S. Foote made a motion to pass the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #2 FOR 2018 from the Dryden Agriculture Advisory Committee to the Town Board regarding the approval of Right to Farm signage.

Whereas the Committee sees fit that the outlying places on major entrance roads to Dryden be marked with the Right to Farm signage referencing our laws pertaining to Agricultural zoning,

And Whereas the Committee has identified sixteen (16) locations to post the signage totaling twenty (20) signs,

And Whereas after speaking with the Town Highway Department they have agreed to put the signs up in the designated locations,

And Whereas the cost per each sign would be \$115.00,

Therefore, the Dryden Agriculture Advisory Committee requests that the Dryden Town Board authorize the purchase of said signage and authorize the Town Highway Department to move forward with the project.

Motion was seconded by K. LaMotte
Unanimously passed

Review of letter to Commissioner Ball composed by M. McRae

They reviewed the letter that M. McRae composed incorporating the changes that were suggested at last month's meeting. The committee discussed a quote that was cited in the letter (from members of the Cornell University Department of Animal Science) that states there are over 3 million acres of grasslands in New York State that are not currently being used for agricultural production. They tried to figure out what the Cornell University Department of

Animal Science's definition of "grasslands" is. They also discussed who might bear the costs involved if the PSC was required to provide more interconnect options near marginal lands.

S. Foote made a motion to pass the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #3 FOR 2018 from the Dryden Agriculture Advisory Committee send the letter to Commissioner Richard Ball, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, County Farm Bureau, the County Ag and Farmland Protection Agency, and all other legislative entities as appropriate, and

Further resolved that Evan Carpenter, Committee Chair, sign said letter on behalf of the Dryden Agriculture Advisory Committee.

Motion was seconded by J. Sherman
Unanimously passed

Resolution regarding incorporating the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan into the Town of Dryden Comprehensive Plan

They looked over the proposed resolution.

K. LaMotte made a motion to pass the following resolution:

Resolution #4 for 2018 from the Dryden Agriculture Advisory Committee to the Town Board regarding incorporating the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan into the Town of Dryden Comprehensive Plan.

Whereas the Town Board has accepted the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, and

Whereas New York State Ag and Markets recommends that the Ag Plan be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, and

Whereas it is a thorough representative document of agriculture within the Town, and

Whereas it is the guidance document for the work of the Agriculture Advisory Committee

Therefore be it resolved that the Agriculture Advisory Committee request that the Dryden Town Board add the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan to the appendix of the Comprehensive Plan.

J. Sherman seconded the motion
Unanimously passed

“Carbon Farming Act” update

D. Teeter reported that she did research the issue. She read through it, and she talked with the Farm Bureau about this and they support this Carbon Farming Act. She questioned the following statement: Allowance of a credit for a tax payer that is an agricultural business that produces farm products shall be allowed a credit against the tax imposed by this article for the practice of carbon farming. She wondered where that was and found that it goes against the farm tax. K. LaMotte asked if this is a one-time thing. D. Teeter said she thinks it would be annually and would go against your state income tax every year. J. Sherman asked how they are going to figure this credit. There will be a formula, probably grassland, woodland, pasture, etc. will somehow figure into the equation. D. Teeter said she thinks the DEC is charged with developing the formula and implementing it. M. McRae said there’s already precedence for monetizing these credits and spoke about rice farmers in the south and how the system worked in that region. M. McRae suggested if the Committee supports this that a letter be written to Barbara Lifton thanking her for supporting this agricultural legislation. She said that this probably won’t go anywhere this year; it’s still in committee. K. LaMotte asked if there was something comparable at the Federal level and the answer was that it seems to be done at the State level.

M. McRae made a motion that the Dryden Agriculture Advisory Committee sends a letter to Barbara Lifton thanking her for her support of this Assembly Bill/A3281.

K. LaMotte seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

M. McRae volunteered to write the letter to Barbara Lifton and will e-mail it to everyone for their review.

Zoning definitions document

D. Teeter provided the document and the Committee reviewed it. Some clarification is still needed before they can proceed, particularly regarding “logging operations”. D. Teeter called G. Franz (while at the meeting) regarding their concerns and he agreed and suggested changing it.

M. McRae asked Kathy Wakeman what would be the best way for the Committee to get information out to residents. K. Wakeman suggested sending her updates and she’d publish the information in her column “Dryden Town Talk”. This is published in the Ithaca Journal every other Thursday. The Town columns are now done bi-weekly. She said she would love to do this and get this information out to the public. She said that in her initial article she thought she’d introduce who was here and go over what topics were covered tonight. If in the future you have things that are coming up or something you’d like the public to be aware of she’d be happy to put it in her column anytime. She said she feels that it’s important to have communication regarding what Dryden is proposing to the State. D. Teeter said the Town Board had recently approved the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan that this group has been working on for quite awhile, so what’s happening now is they’re starting to implement it.

C. Schutt said he sent a resolution out to a couple of committee members that the Conservation Board had passed at their last meeting regarding the establishment of a funding source to be used for facilitating conservation easements within the Town. J. Leifer said that the Ag Committee and the Conservation Board have been tasked with coming up with a funding source for conservation easements and the farmland protection. Currently the only funding sources we have are property taxes, sales tax and PILOT agreements. He said we need to come up with a way to permanently fund an “open space protection plan”. C. Schutt said this discussion came up because they did vote to put the money into the Prince farm for the conservation easement, but they had to get the money from the general fund. J. Leifer said the only consistent source is property taxes. This same issue came up in 2010 regarding funding for the Recreation fund and they ended up designating 3 cents from the property tax bills to fund the Recreation reserve which isn’t a lot of money, but better than nothing. If you depend on sales tax for funding you never know what the actual amount will end up being; depends on if it’s a good year or bad year. The last two years they’ve budgeted less from sales tax than they got. He said that was done on purpose. D. Teeter said there are some areas down state that have been extremely successful with a real estate tax. Every time the house sells you tack a fee on at the town level. She wasn’t sure what had to be done in order to do that, but there is money available from the State to

implement farmland protection plans. She doesn't think it's a lot of money, but it would be something. It could help to hire a consultant, someone who's knowledgeable about how this is done. K. LaMotte said that the bottom line is to raise money for any of this it will have to be a tax of some sort. J. Leifer said one thing they're doing for the Rec fund is something through the PUD's which is to require a developer to either set aside open space or just give an amount of money to the Town for the Rec fund. He said he's using the Rec Fund as an example and spoke about how some areas (downstate) are tacking on fees to new residential development either by per unit or bedroom and the money goes directly into a dedicated Recreation Reserve fund. He said there's probably no reason you couldn't do the same thing for open space farmland protection as long as it's a dedicated fund for that purpose, you can't just add a fee on and put it in the General fund. K. LaMotte said downstate they have a bigger base to draw from. J. Leifer agreed and said we're not going to raise a ton of money. D. Teeter said you don't have to raise a ton of money right off the bat, you raise some gradually and after five to six years you may have enough. J. Leifer said there's the unreserved fund balance, but we don't want to dip into that especially when you have part of the Town fighting about money for a bridge. He said he'll check with J. Case to see if there's a separate account fund already set up for this (open space funding); and if there is, it currently has no money in it so figuring out a funding source is really important.

S. Foote made a motion to pass the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #5 for 2018 FROM THE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE TOWN BOARD RECOMMENDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FUND TO BE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF FACILITATING CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ON SUBSTANTIAL LANDS WITHIN THE TOWN OF DRYDEN.

Whereas the preservation of farmland, natural areas and open space is encouraged in the Dryden Comprehensive Plan, in the Natural Resources Conservation Plan and in the Town of Dryden Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan, and

Whereas there is increasing commercial and housing development in parts of the Town of Dryden, and

Whereas conservation easements will foster the preservation of natural areas, and the continued agricultural use of farmland, protecting said areas from development in perpetuity, and

Whereas such preservation will be of benefit to the current and future citizens of the Town of Dryden, and

Therefore, The Town of Dryden Agriculture Advisory Committee recommends that the Dryden Town Board establish a fund devoted to expenses related to contributions towards the cost of obtaining such conservation easements on land deemed desirable for preservation* within the Town of Dryden.

* Methods and Selection Criteria for Land Protection and Acquisition. 30 December 2014:
<http://dryden.ny.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Methods-Criteria-for-Land-Protection-12-30-14.pdf>

K. LaMotte seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

S. Foote asked if they should be planning for Dairy Days. It is the second Saturday in June, the 9th. S. Foote suggested the theme should be the “Right to Farm” if they could get a sign by that date. They could explain what “Right to Farm” is. Everyone felt that was a great idea. It was suggested they have copies of the Agricultural Plan and the Right to Farm Law available, also. S. Foote said he will talk with R. Young to see about the time frame for having signs available and let everyone know. They also talked about enlarging farm pictures to have on display.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting, seconded and it was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Michaud
Deputy Town Clerk