

**AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 13, 2019**

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

Absent: Steve Foote, Erin Bieber

Liaison(s): Craig Schutt, Conservation Board

Guest(s): Monika Roth, CCE of Tompkins County
Naomi Crimm

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

Review and approval of minutes dated October 9, 2019

K. LaMotte made a motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by M. McRae and unanimously approved.

Old Business

M. Roth of CCE-Tompkins brought a map that had been updated from our previous meetings, along with a list of the tax map numbers and owners of the parcels. A lengthy review/discussion took place and suggestions were made of what parcel owners will receive a letter to determine if the property is being used for agricultural purposes.

New Business – GREEN NEW DEAL

Naomi Crimm, Cornell Grad Student, studying planning. She is interested in the process and how to bring different stakeholders on board to ensure that the policy that is created reflects many voices. So far, it seems to be focused only on the City of Ithaca, but there is potential for things to happen that will affect the surrounding area. One voice that hasn't been heard yet is the voice of farmers. The goal is to collect these different voices and make a report that the City of Ithaca will see and hopefully that can influence the way that the approach this. Potentially the City could look for land to lease for a community solar project, another could be looking to invest in carbon offsets. Paying rural landowners or farmers to reduce emissions for what the City is unable to do.

She is looking for our reactions to those types of policies. What should they have in mind?

Discussion:

- Install solar panels on buildings in the City.
- The process of sequestering the carbon, you have short-term (such as an annual crop), you have long-term (such as forests). Whether you are dealing with forestry land or annually cropped ground, there is a different mathematical formula that must be used.
- Some research shows that annual crops do not really sequester any carbon, you might break even.
- Equipment needed for planting is coming from carbon-based fossil fuels.
- How does the State factor in with all the state forests/lands that are around?

- New technology for measuring carbon sequestration.
- If you decrease the amount of tillage you do, you're not using as much gas.
- Hopefully policy will not put more burden on farms.
- Challenges: Weather and regulations.
- People in the City do not understand that what might work in one part of the county will not work throughout the entire county. Soil structures, altitudes, scale of the farm all need to be taken in to account.
- Misunderstanding the people in the City have about agriculture. Cost effective means.
- Let the farmer decide what would work best for their own farm.
- Paying farmers for various conservation type programs, there should be a program that pays them for carbon sequestration. It must be measurable.
- Biochar vs. charcoal.

It was requested that the Deputy Clerk provide Naomi's contact information to all the Committee members, so they can reach out to her with any additional input. She would love to have more in depth conversations.

M. McRae – She attended the Planning Board meeting earlier today and they have a draft document for community outreach for the comprehensive plan changes. Part of this draft document is a list of representative stakeholders and they happen to have divided them into things like business & economic development organizations, community organizations, etc. Under business & economic development organizations, they have started with things like First National Bank of Dryden, CCE of Tompkins County, not all stakeholders in Dryden and they will narrow it down. It was suggested that if there were ag businesses who would like to be on this list and have their opinions asked at one of these public stakeholder meetings, we could get the names to the planning board steering committee. She would be willing to do this. If you are interested, or if you know somebody who might be interested, let's get some more ag people involved. First public meeting is planned for February.

M. Roth – Advised there will be a resource fair: Planning for Transition, being held November 23rd in Auburn (see attached).

M. McRae – Mentioned there will be a riparian buffer workshop on 11/21/19 at the History Center in Ithaca.

There being no further business, K. LaMotte made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by B. Magee and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chrystle Terwilliger
Deputy Town Clerk