

COLUMBIA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD MEETING
April 5, 2007

The meeting of the AFPB was called to order at 9:35 am by Chairman Marian Dunbar at First Pioneer Farm Credit. Those also present were: Roland Vosburgh, Joel Allen, J. Lawrence Benson, Tom Jacque, Mallory Mort, Chuck Colaruotolo Jr., Weir Stewart, and Steve Hadcock. Regrets were received from Suzette Booy, Betty Young, and Jim Waterhouse.

Roland reported that the Section 303 B applicants from October 2006 were approved by NYS DAM for addition to Agr. Districts 7 and 8. There were a few minor changes to the stats for Agr. Districts 1 and 2, but they have now been submitted to NYSDAM for re-certification. We are currently still collecting data from the worksheets for Agr. Districts 3 and 4, and we have been notified that the review needs to commence for Districts 5 and 6.

He reported on the "sold out" Agr. Brunch that was held at the Bridges at the St. Charles Hotel on March 14th which included a presentation by Phil Gottwals on Agriculture in the Hudson Valley, several other speakers, and a kick off to the Columbia County Bounty effort including presentation of the notebook listing 65 chefs and 56 farm producers who will work together to provide local food in their restaurants. Joel circulated copies of the program and menu of that day for our information. He stated, with the exception of only a couple of items, everything prepared and served was produced "locally."

Roland reported that he, Marian, and Joel attended the Hudson Valley Agr. Partnership Conference at CGCC on March 16th, including several of the work sessions.

He reported on the training session he attended put on by the Pace University Land Use Law Center, in conjunction with the Columbia Hudson Partnership, for town and village officials. Very well attended and productive session. And he told us about the Kinderhook Watershed Alliance that is being established.

He mentioned the "Guidelines for Agr. Farmland Protection Plans for local municipalities with State Money" that have just been released by NYS DAM and a reference to the January 2006 letter he wrote to Bob Somers at NYS DAM regarding the AFPB role in these Municipal PLANS. It was suggested he re-submit his questions to John Brennan, the new person on staff at DAM for Farmland Protection.

His hand outs included:

- copies of the questions he has forwarded to the County Board of Assessors following our meeting with them in February.

- copies of the farmer's survey developed by the Keep Farming effort in Clermont, Livingston, and Germantown. (Copies for you at next month's meeting)

And for our information, Jerry Cosgrove, formerly with American Farmland Trust, is a new Deputy Commissioner at NYS DAM.

Roland's last question to us was "where to next with our Plan?" He stated that he had recently reviewed the AFPB Plan from Cattaraugus County which was completed this past fall. It was done by a consulting firm including Phil Gottwals. He also reported that the links on our

DRAFT Plan at the CCAFPB web site at <www.columbiacountyny.com> are now up and “live.” We discussed how we might track hits at that site and Roland agreed to follow up with Sherri.

We discussed the need, by Agr. and Mkts. law, to have a public hearing for the Plan and how we might tie in a public information meeting as well - together or separate? Also to consider potential questions to address and our responses. Roland read us the 22 questions he has prepared and agreed to distribute them, with his responses, to the Committee.

After much discussion, Tom moved we offer a public information session and the public hearing, one after the other, on the same evening in the same location, the info session preceding the hearing. This motion was seconded and approved unanimously. We discussed several date possibilities and Larry moved we set it for Thursday evening, November 8th, 2007 at 7pm in the Extension meeting hall. This motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Roland will work with Steve, Suzette, and Joel to prepare a presentation for the public information session.

Joel updated us on the Katchkie Farm operation being established on 60 acres on Fischer Road, in the Town of Kinderhook, located behind the Kinderhook Toyota business on Route 9H. This farm will raise produce for a large catering business (Great Performances) in NYC, as well as for selling at the Green Markets, and attracting youth from around Columbia County, to work in their own garden space there and preparing food.

He reported on the semi-annual Agr. Roundtable he hosted at CCE on March 23rd. 15 people representing 9 different agencies, organizations, boards, and committees attended. The next Roundtable will be held on October 19th. Joel also explained his efforts in trying to get the official word on Weir Stewart’s appointment to the AFPB by the Columbia County SWCD as a “designee” of their Board chairman. The last message he received is that it was done and he’d get a set of their minutes. Tom will look into this for us.

Larry reported that for our information, there was a group in New Lebanon that had been called together to consider a Keep Farming effort supported by the Glynwood Center, but after some discussion, they decided that there wasn’t enough production agriculture in New Lebanon, Canaan, or even southern Rensselaer County, to warrant such an effort and expense.

Chairman Dunbar asked for a review of the minutes for approval. Tom moved they be accepted as presented, seconded, and approved unanimously.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 with our next meeting planned for 9:30 am at First Pioneer Farm Credit on May 3, 2007,

Respectfully submitted,
Joel W. Allen, secretary.