

Columbia County Ag & Farmland Protection Board
Meeting Minutes
February 7, 2008, First Pioneer Farm Credit, Claverack, NY

The meeting was called to order by Chair Marian Dunbar at 9:40 A.M. Members present were: Betty Young, Larry Benson, Roland Vosburgh, Weir Stewart, Jim Waterhouse, Mallory Mort, Suzette Booy, Chuck Colaruotolo and Steve Hadcock. Chair of the Columbia County Board of Supervisors, Arthur Baer, was present as well.

Chair Dunbar thanked Chair Baer for agreeing to attend the AFP Board meeting. Introductions took place, so that Chair Baer could know who is currently serving on the AFP Board. Each member gave a brief introduction and some information about the Board. Mr. Baer introduced himself. One goal he shared is to work with the Board of Supervisors to develop a strategic plan for the county.

Chair Dunbar expressed that one goal that the board is working on is a County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan (AFP plan). She mentioned, however, there is no mandate to prepare one. In the past, the Board of Supervisors was unable to provide money early on for the development of an AFP plan and therefore the process has been slow and deliberate. The draft of Columbia County AFP Plan is at the Columbia County website for review. Chair Dunbar then introduced the idea of a standing Agricultural Committee of the Board of Supervisors. An exchange of ideas and thoughts took place between Mr. Baer and Board members. Arguments for the establishment of the standing committee were shared.

After Mr. Baer left, Jim Waterhouse mentioned that we may have been too defensive in our discussion regarding the farmland protection plan. Roland acknowledged that this may have been the case and this was reflected in the revised Section 2.2l distributed to members to address the economics/land use issue. Chuck recommended that in the follow-up correspondence a different tone regarding the farmland protection plan be shared with Mr. Baer.

Larry mentioned that he saw Peter Paden, from Columbia Land Conservancy, at a function and stated that Marian would be in contact with Peter about the development of the farmland protection plan. It was suggested that representatives of some groups (i.e., Columbia Land Conservancy) be invited to a meeting to discuss the plan. Chuck agreed that a discussion with other groups would be good. However, need to be mindful of how ideas that are in the plan (current and proposed) will be implemented. Chair Dunbar stated that she will learn from Mr. Paden if he would like the opportunity to meet and talk to the Board. A general discussion took place.

Chair Dunbar distributed a list of Board membership of years past. Roland Vosburgh distributed some additional documentation reflecting some of the discussions of the AFP Board prior to preparation of the draft AFP plan.

Liz Brock, from American Farmland Trust, mentioned in the letter sent to Chair Dunbar that this Board could gain from reviewing protection plans from other counties. Roland shared a memo, dated May 1, 2003, that discusses the review of AFP plans from other counties. Roland shared that he recently reviewed the Livingston County AFP Plan. This county spent \$89,000 for their farmland protection plan. Roland distributed copies of the land use portion of the Livingston County AFP Plan to Board members. Roland shared that many of the goals in the Livingston County Plan are addressed in our draft AFP plan.

Roland disseminated a copy of a draft survey to determine who in local government positions (e.g. membership on an elected or appointed board) define their main occupation as being farming.

Larry shared that he talked to Eric Ooms and stated that the Columbia County Farm Bureau is generally in favor of the draft Farmland Protection Plan. Eric shared that a key bridge for a dairy farmer in Copake has been closed. The closure jeopardizes how manure is spread and has negative financial consequences for the farm. Larry also mentioned that Marisa Cody, from Columbia Land Conservancy, has asked him to go to a legislative day in Albany to talk about receiving a purchase of development rights grant for his farm. He asked for clarification if he could or should go as a representative of the Board. Larry was encouraged to go as a New Lebanon landowner.

Motion made by Roland and seconded Betty by to accept the minutes as submitted. Motion passed.

Motion made by Mallory and seconded Chuck by to adjourn. Motion passed.

Minutes prepared by:

Steve Hadcock, Secretary