

Columbia County Ag & Farmland Protection Board  
Meeting Minutes  
March 5, 2009, First Pioneer Farm Credit, Claverack, NY

The meeting was called to order by Chair Marian Dunbar at 9:37 A.M. Members present were: Larry Benson, Jim Waterhouse, Chuck Colaruotolo, Mallory Mort, Suzette Booy, Betty Young, Kenneth Flood and Steve Hadcock. Guests present were: Todd Erling with Hudson Valley Agricultural Development Corporation, Roland Vosburgh of the Columbia County Planning Department, Jim Davenport, a dairy farmer and Laura Sager representing Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District. A quorum was present.

Chair Dunbar called the meeting to order and started with allowing Todd Erling to share the work scope of the Ag and Markets grant. Todd asked for meeting times and dates to start working on the work scope. The Farmland Protection Plan fits well with County leadership's desire for an agricultural economic strategy. Roland asked if the grant application has been submitted to NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. Todd said it has not, but a draft has been prepared and invited input for revision.

Marian asked Todd if the identification of agricultural assets has started and what avenues have been used to determine the assets. Todd stated that the process of identifying agricultural assets has started with reviewing economic data. Ken asked Marian to define what she means by agricultural assets. Marian gave her definition of agricultural assets. Marian asked what time line Todd is proposing for completion of the grant. Todd stated that the time line for completion of the Farmland Protection plan revision is 12 to 14 months from the date of the grant submission. Roland asked Todd to define new groups that are interested in agriculture. Todd shared an interest by local chefs to purchase local agricultural products and attempting to identify agricultural land owned by non-farming landowners that are willing to have their land used for farming. Marian encouraged Todd to get as many organizations in the county involved in the revision of the plan so that there is comprehensive ownership of what is developed.

Ken Flood mentioned that on March 31 having a "planning conversation" where the chairs of town planning boards are being invited to talk. Marian will also be invited to the meeting representing the AFPB. Suzette wants to attend and be part of the discussion as well. Ken offered an invitation to her to attend.

Chair Dunbar introduced Laura Sager and she is here on behalf of the Bob Podris, the Chair of Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District. Marian reiterated that Laura does not have any voting privileges on the Board. Marian mentioned that Jim Davenport attended last months meeting and has expressed a willingness to join the Board. Motion made by Betty Young and seconded by Jim Waterhouse to write a letter to Chair Art Baer suggesting Lowell "Jim" Davenport be appointed to the Board. Motion passed.

Chair Dunbar shared her vision for the Board to advise county and local government on agricultural issues. Marian asked Ken if anything came up at the last county government committee meeting about agriculture. Ken stated that he informed the committee about the grant the AFPB is submitting. Ken stated that he is attempting to do education of leadership in the county about various aspects of the economy of Columbia County and its importance. Chuck voiced his support of the vision for the Board. Marian reported that Chuck has been appointed to the Farm Bureau Local Issues committee. Chuck and Kent Keller are members of this Farm Bureau committee. Marian encouraged Chuck to get any

information developed by this committee to the secretary.

Chuck shared with Marian the mission statement and other information about Columbia County Farm Bureau and asked that it be added to the AFPB website. Discussion ensued about regarding concerns and merits of placing this information on the AFPB website. The consensus was to place the Farm Bureau materials on the website.

Chuck gave an update on the radio tower issue between Columbia County and Friends of Olana. Procedural law has been found regarding view shed and may delay or deny another radio tower being constructed on the Eger property.

Suzette shared that a meeting has been set up with county assessors and having Mark Twentyman from NYS Office of Real Property Services and Robert Somers from NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets come and talk about agricultural districts and agricultural assessment. The meeting will be held March 11 from six to eight in the DMV building upstairs. Use the sixth street entrance to enter the building. Suzette mentioned that next year she would like to offer similar training, but open it up to the agricultural community. Suzette mentioned that there will be a County Computer Committee meeting on March 18 and will discuss GIS. Dutchess County representatives will be there to share ideas about their GIS. Todd shared that on March 11 is the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce Agricultural Brunch from 11:00 to 12:30 P.M.

Roland asked Todd if NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets considers the new business Fresh Ocean an agricultural enterprise. Todd stated that this new business is considered an agricultural business.

Steve mentioned the Columbia County Agricultural Roundtable will be held on March 20 starting at 9:30 A.M. at the Extension Education Center.

Marian asked Jim Waterhouse what trends he is seeing in his travels due to the economic downturn. The downturn has impacted donations to land preservation groups and many have put plans on hold.

Marian asked Larry what progress has been made on the purchase of development rights process. Larry things are moving along at "glacial speed." The economic downturn has impacted the process. The property has to be reappraised. Ken mentioned he made a call to NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets inquiring about the status of the purchase.

Roland mentioned that the Section 303b petitions were submitted to NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Patrick Hooker. He attended the listening session that Senator Schumer had on February 16. He questions the Senator about the "Buy America" section of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Motion made Betty and seconded by Chuck to accept the minutes as corrected.

The next meeting will take place on April 2 and be held at First Pioneer Farm Credit.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen E. Hadcock, Secretary