

Columbia County Ag & Farmland Protection Board  
Meeting Minutes  
May 7, 2009, First Pioneer Farm Credit, Claverack, NY

The meeting was called to order by Chair Marian Dunbar at 9:34 A.M. Members present were: Larry Benson, Jim Waterhouse, Jim Davenport, and Steve Hadcock. The only guest present was Roland Vosburgh of the Columbia County Planning and Economic Development. A quorum was present.

Chair Dunbar read correspondence from Board member Suzette Booy about the willingness of Columbia County 911 to share with other county departments and local municipalities the pictometry system they have. Roland explained what pictometry was.

Chair Dunbar stated she read an article in the newspaper that was written by John Funicello, President of Empire State Family Farm Alliance regarding House of Representatives bill number 875 (HR 875) and contacted Roland for to see if he could get more information. Roland reviewed HR 875 and prepared for Board members comments and questions about the bill. Roland discussed highlights of the document he prepared. Based on Roland's review to date, the bill would set up five food establishment categories. These establishments, however, do not encompass farms per se, but farmers who add value to their agricultural product may be impacted. Larry questioned what action the Board should take. It was suggested that the Board write a letter to our federal representatives (Senators and Congressman) expressing our concerns with the proposed legislation. Roland would like to circulate the document he prepared to county, state and federal elected officials.

Chair Dunbar reviewed an outline of the time progression for the grant proposal to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) for development of a farmland protection plan. The process started in October with announcement of the availability of grant money. She highlighted what actions have taken place each month since October. As of today's meeting, the grant has not been submitted. Jim Waterhouse asked if a deadline for submission was discussed at the last Board meeting. Steve stated that April 17 was discussed at the last meeting as a final date. Jim Waterhouse asked Steve when he received the second draft of the proposed worked scope from Todd Erling. Steve stated he received it yesterday and learned that he is the only one that has received it. Steve promised to send copies of the work scope to the other members of the Board. Concerns regarding the lack of progress on submitting the grant were expressed by Board members present. Marian asked Roland if he has heard anything about the Columbia County Agricultural Initiative. Roland has not heard anything about the initiative. Roland recommended that Chair Dunbar call Commissioner Kenneth Flood to express our concerns about the progress of the grant submission.

Chair Dunbar shared correspondence she had received. The Community and Rural Development Institute (CARDI) at Cornell University requesting information for their database. Columbia County Land Conservancy is having their annual barbeque on May 24 and will be held at the Old Chatham Shepherding Company.

Jim Waterhouse asked Jim Davenport his impression of newly elected Congressman Scott

Murphy in relation to agriculture. From what Jim Davenport has heard, Congressman Murphy has been appointed to the House of Representatives Agriculture Committee and he feels that the new congressman will do a good job serving on the committee.

Jim Davenport was asked if Columbia County and New York State Farm Bureau were aware of HR 875. He said that they were aware of the proposed legislation and New York State Farm Bureau position is that USDA and FDA be adequately funded to hire enough inspectors and enforce current laws.

Roland reported on attending a meeting that was sponsored by Orange County AFPB. Bob Somers from NYSDAM attended the meeting and presented there. Lucy Joyce from CCE of Orange County has prepared Zoning Recommendations for Backyard Poultry and Livestock Rearing. Roland distributed a copy of the recommendations. Steve stated that he would like to do a similar meeting here in Columbia County in the fall. Roland picked up "A Portrait of Agriculture in Orange County, NY" and shared it with Board members present. The portrait is based on 2007 Census of Agriculture data. Jim Waterhouse shared what municipalities in Orange County are doing to help support farmers in Orange County

Motion made by Jim Davenport and seconded Larry Benson by to accept the March and April minutes. Motion passed.

Chair Dunbar attended on April 6 the "Planning Conversation" meeting held by the Columbia County Board of Supervisors at Columbia Greene Community College. Discussed potential development projects that might come to local townships. Planning Board Chairs, discussed how land use planning impacts economic development. Roland reflected that he does not recall that agriculture was discussed much.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 A.M.

The next meeting will take place on June 4, if needed, and be held at First Pioneer Farm Credit if needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen E. Hadcock  
Secretary