

Schoharie County Planning & Development Agency



349 Mineral Springs Road
Cobleskill, NY 12043-5605
(518) 234-3751 / Fax (518) 234-3951

Jody Zakrevsky
Director

Alicia A. Terry
Director

Seward and Carlisle Agricultural Committee Meeting October 26, 2009 -- Schoharie County Planning office

Attendance:

Committee: Larry Phillips, Mac Holmes, Michelle Linnane, Larry Bradt, Linda Cross
Consultant: Laura Ten Eyck
County: Michele Strobeck, Zach Thompson
Audience: Theresa Murphy

Meeting started at 7:13.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the September meeting. Movement to accept the minutes made by Mac and seconded by Larry Phillips; minutes approved unanimously.

The committee reviewed the NYS Ag. and Farmland Planning Grant Program map that showed grants awarded and plans under review. This led to a discussion on how progress can only come as a result of this Plan from Planning Boards implementing what is written in the Plan. This tied in with the issue of commitment, both from the town and state level – no progress will be made unless all sides demonstrate commitment to protecting agriculture.

Laura mentioned that there will be a Senate Ag. Committee Roundtable on the SUNY Cobleskill campus Nov. 17th. Featured during this event will be Senator Darrel J. Aubertine, chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

AFT's Review of Land Use Regulations was presented by Laura:

Carlisle's regulations at once contain many vague descriptions that can be interpreted in a wide variety of ways and require too detailed information at times (i.e. maps with a scale of 1"=50' with 10' topographical intervals not feasible with large parcels). Less intensive reviews have been applied at times but with no documentation as to when or why this would take place. Regulations should also contain missing definitions and discussions on slaughterhouses and design standards, respectively.

Seward has absurd lot requirements (lead to 5+ acre parcels with a house sited in the middle, ruining the surrounding land for agricultural purposes) and need to review their definition of agriculture. These topics will be further discussed at a future meeting when Rick Bates is present, as land use regulation in Seward is an area of expertise of his.

The "AFT Toolbox" label has been inappropriately applied to this process; Laura should be providing this plan's version of the toolbox at the next meeting. This will feature a discussion of both LDR

(lease of development rights) and PDR (purchase of development rights) and how one or both of those processes could benefit continued agriculture in Seward and Carlisle.

Zach presented to the committee an update on the Seward Survey: 413 surveys have arrived and as of this meeting 303 have been entered. Some general thoughts based on responses thus far: many find zoning to be too restrictive but a majority of people don't know the regulations and would like more information. People want to see the land around them remain rural/agricultural and would least like to see high density residential, industrial, or large business. There is support for alternative energy of all types in the town but more information is needed before there would be full support for any type. More results will be presented when all surveys have been entered and queries have been done.

An update on a potential feed mill was given by Larry Phillips (excerpt from Oct. 22 Energy Taskforce Meeting follows):

“Bio-Mass- Mr. VanWormer stated the Blue Seal Plant in Central Bridge has been purchased by Paul VanDerWerken. Mr. Cox gave an update and mentioned that he is currently working on submitting a proposal for a grant to help feed bio-mass plants. This would be a multiple county shared program and is looking to include Otsego, Delaware, Schoharie, maybe Chenango and possibly Steuben Counties. Mr. Cox shared a news release on an incentive program from USDA that will pay suppliers up to \$45/dry ton for bio-mass material to qualify you must have a bill of sale from a certified buyer. Mr. Cox stated that he hasn't been able to look into NYSERDA for possible grant funding. Cornell Cooperative Extension is having an Ag & Energy “expo” in February and can update on it more next meeting. Mr. Cox suggested bringing in Mr. VanDerWerken, new owner of Blue Seal, to see what his plans might be for bio-mass production. Mr. Phillips was concerned that the \$45/dry ton for bio-mass would interfere with pricing/profits on hay. Mr. VanWormer said he believes that it won't be a conflict but that a new market will emerge. Mr. Cox said that maybe at first it will have an impact but believes it wouldn't last. Mr. Phillips recommended to Mr. Cox that Cooperative Extension put out a Press Release if this all comes about.”

Mapping has been done for all data that each town has submitted. There is still a portion of Carlisle that needs to be completed by the Carlisle committee at their convenience so that it can be included with existing data. Seward has been given maps with the most recent Ag. exemptions as the noteworthy layer. Once all data has been submitted to County Planning maps for “active agriculture” will be produced.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00.

For the next meeting (Nov. 23rd):

AFT Document of Goals and Recommendations

AFT “Toolbox”

Land Use Survey Update – Seward

Analysis of Land Use Regulations, cont'd

Mapping – IDing active agriculture

Minutes submitted by Zachary Thompson