

Schoharie County Planning & Development Agency



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Seward and Carlisle Agricultural Committee Meeting
March 30, 2009 Schoharie County Planning office

Attendance:

Committee: Linda Cross, Larry Bradt, Richard Bates, Larry Phillips, Mac Holmes, Michelle Linnane, Peter Bent

Consultant: Laura Ten Eyck

County: Zach Thompson

Audience:

Start: 7:14 pm

Committee reviewed the minutes from the 2/23/09 meeting. Motion for approval by Mac and seconded by Peter; minutes approved unanimously.

Laura provides an update of the interview progress – there are 11 people still to be interviewed (9 interviews have been completed).

A 25% advance of the \$50,000 grant for the towns was discussed and approved unanimously. The voucher to request the \$12,500 was signed by Larry Phillips to be sent to Emma Graham of NYSDAM the following day.

The update of inventory is ongoing in the Town of Carlisle. The next step in this process for both towns is to use the inventory, maps provided by the County, and knowledge of local agriculture to provide a list of parcels active in agriculture. A discussion followed regarding the quality of maps provided to the Towns and whether it was necessary or possible to create new maps to ease this process. After a discussion with the SCPDA GIS Specialist, it was confirmed that the maps showed the most up-to-date aerial photos and would have to be sufficient (along with the tools mentioned above).

The definition of agriculture was finalized and will mirror the NYSDAM definition of agriculture, but without the revenue and size restrictions. This is meant to allow as many types and sizes of farming practices as possible in each town, particularly considering the abundance of soil that is not suitable for crop growing and better equipped for pasture lands or niche farming.

Zach was asked if he could contact a soils expert within the county to come to a future meeting and discuss some of the issues regarding soil in the context of the Protection Plan.

Laura explained the Cost of Community Services (COCS) analysis that David Cox of CCE will be doing for Seward and Carlisle. Once Seward and Carlisle have completed their “lands in ag.” list, David can come up with data showing taxes paid vs. services required for different land uses.

The public meetings were reviewed by the committee: both meetings had good turnouts and contributions. Those in attendance appreciated that the plan was being done, the maps available at the meeting, and that the plan is not regulatory or prohibitive. In Carlisle, a lot of the discussion centered on the various types of agriculture in the town, the prevalence of pasture land, and the potential for a processing plant in the area. Seward’s meeting focused on how big of an issue taxes are in the area, whether the town or county could provide aid to those who don’t meet the \$10,000 threshold, and other ways that the Plan could help small farmers. Whether or not the plan has any teeth was another issue raised.

Zach brought up posting information from these meetings online. It was decided that the minutes from each meeting and all of the progress reports should be made available on the Towns’ respective websites. Carlisle’s Town Clerk will put this information online for them while the SCPDA will put it on Seward’s website.

The last piece of business for the meeting was whether or not the committee wanted to vote on tasks completed by Laura. The committee decided that it would not be necessary or productive to vote on drafts of documents, and that all voting should be done only for completed versions.

For the Next Meeting:

**Establish Goals for the Plan
County Soils Expert?**