

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
September 28, 2009 -- Schoharie County Planning office

Attendance:

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

Meeting started at 7:02.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the August meeting. Movement to accept the minutes made by Michelle and seconded by Larry Phillips; minutes approved unanimously as apple cider and cider donuts from Indian Ladder Farms were passed out to all in attendance.

Laura compiled a list based on discussions from the August meeting regarding Goals and Recommendations and organized it by Goals for the committee to discuss. Michelle L. asked if a recommendation of increasing tax abatement for farmers and decreasing tax abatement for non-farmers should be reworded or simply taken out all together because tax issues are a major concern because a portion of the population thinks farmers get enough of a tax break already. Michelle L. then suggested the possibility of a tiered approach. For example, one with three tiers: farmers get the biggest breaks, followed by landowners leasing to farmers (so that landowners continue to lease to farmers and the land stays productive), and then farmers just starting out who might not meet the revenue requirements to receive agricultural exemptions under current laws. Laura said this committee was the only one that came up with recommendations like this and they should therefore try to improve as best they can to include it in the plan, if possible.

A discussion regarding the feed situation in the county ensued and Michele S. will talk to Scott Kelley of Kelley Farm and Garden and the owner(s) of the Feed Mill to gather pellet/feed information for dissemination at the next committee meeting.

Cooperation with local Amish Markets was brought up as an option and will be explored further in the coming months.

There are currently four headings for Goals to be included in the Plan: Support, Economic, Educate, and Resources. Some sort of mentoring initiative or program was mentioned as a viable measure that would be beneficial: would mentoring fall under the spectrum of "Educate?" Should the Goals be

listed in order of priority? Could a consensus ever be reached regarding priority? It would make more sense to organize the Recommendations under the Goals by local vs. county/regional/state impact. The next step is to highlight the best and most important recommendations and Laura will create an AFT toolbox to reflect this.

The revised timeline for plan completion was reviewed – it presently shows the plan being finished in April of 2010 and the deadline is February of 2011, allowing ample time for extra public meetings or plan revision, should that need arise.

Update on the Seward Survey – as of the meeting 351/1624 surveys had been returned for a response rate of 21.6%. A response rate of approximately 25% is expected. The database to enter survey results has been created and those results have begun to be entered for tabulation.

The marking of active agricultural properties is nearly complete in Carlisle. A group of farmers and knowledgeable citizens got together and marked properties using maps with the names of landowners - these maps and updated information from the Town of Seward will be given to GIS Specialist Brian Fleury for the creation of “Active Agriculture” maps for each town.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42.

For the next meeting:

Revisions to Timeline
AFT Document of Goals and Recommendations
Land Use Survey Update – Seward
Analysis of Land Use Regulations
Mapping – IDing active agriculture

Minutes submitted by Zachary Thompson