



**Progress Report
Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Development
Towns of Seward and Carlisle
December 29, 2009**

**Next Meeting: Monday, January 25, 2010, 7 PM, Schoharie County Planning
& Development Agency, 349 Mineral Springs Rd., Cobleskill**

Goals & Recommendations

AFT prepared and submitted draft recommendations to achieve the goals for the plan developed by the committee. At the request of the committee, Laura Ten Eyck, NY field representative for AFT, created a new draft, merging AFT's recommendations with all of the potential recommendations made by the committee to date. The committee has begun to review this document.

At the December meeting the Committee discussed the need to entice business, such as light industry, to locate in the towns to help alleviate the tax burden on the farmers. The committee also discussed Goal IV: Protect Natural Resources and Open Space. To date only one recommendation has been generated for that goal: identify and monitor the quality of natural resources in the towns. The committee discussed why natural resources are important to agriculture and ways in which natural resources could be inventoried. The committee also discussed the environmental and economic impacts of wind turbines and drilling in Marcellus shale for natural gas.

Before the next meeting committee members will thoroughly review all recommendations for Goal I: Support Agriculture at the Town Level, and come prepared for discussion.

Review of Regulations

The review of the land use regulations for the Towns of Seward and Carlisle conducted by American Farmland Trust (AFT) has been completed. The committee has discussed the results of the Carlisle review in detail. Discussion of the Seward analysis is on hold while the committee waits for member Richard Bates, who is on the Seward planning board and played a major role in developing of the zoning law, has a chance to review the document.

Seward's review suggests the Town clarify the language regarding when special use permits will be granted and recommends a new category be created for agricultural enterprises. This category should be subject to site plan review instead of the special use permit process. The review recommends the Town revise its regulations to allow for non-commercial wind energy systems

and also calls for its large minimum lot size and set back requirements to be re-examined as well as to clarify definitions of terms relating to agriculture.

Seward Comprehensive Plan Survey

The Town of Seward land use plan survey results are now in finalized form. Copies of the survey results have been distributed to the Seward committee and will be reviewed by Seward's town board.

Maps & Inventories

Brian Fleury, GIS specialist for Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency (SCPDA), has updated Seward's agricultural lands map. The Carlisle committee continues to work on the maps identifying active agricultural land in the town and is still in the process of finalizing its inventory of types of agriculture.

Economic Impacts of Agriculture

Michele Strobeck, agriculture marketing specialist for SCPDA, will discuss developing a report on the economic impact of agriculture in the towns with David Cox, agriculture program leader for Schoharie County Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Conversion Pressure

The committee discussed how to go about defining the level of development pressure on agricultural land. Committee members will contact their respective town clerks and code enforcement officers to gather information on the number of building permits issued for new residential and commercial construction during each of the last five years.