



**Progress Report
Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Development**

**Towns of Seward and Carlisle
January 21, 2009**

Prepared by Laura Ten Eyck, Field Consultant, American Farmland Trust

Lee Pratt Leaves Schoharie County Planning Department

Lee Pratt, Agriculture Marketing Specialist for the Schoharie County Planning Department announced he would be leaving his position effective January 1, 2009. Lee has been directly involved in the process since the towns first applied for the grant from NYDAM to develop the plan. Zachary Thompson, a planning assistant from the Schoharie County Planning Department, will replace him. Zachary attended the December meeting with Lee and has since assumed all of Lee's responsibilities in support of the joint executive committee. The transition has been extremely smooth.

Farmer and Landowner Interviews Underway

At their December 22nd meeting the joint executive committee finalized the lists of interview candidates for both Seward and Carlisle. Introduction letters for each town were also approved. These letters were mailed to interview candidates on 12/31/08. The letter of introduction describes the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan development process and introduces Laura from American Farmland Trust as the person conducting the interviews. The purpose of the interviews is to gain farmer and landowner perspectives of agriculture in the towns to aid the committee in the development of each town's plan. Laura began to contact interview candidates January 12th and will begin interviews January 15th. When the interviews are completed Laura will write a summary of the findings. The interviews are confidential and although quotes may be used to illustrate certain points they will not be attributed.

Public Meeting Dates Set

Dates for public meetings to gather public input for the development of the agriculture and farmland protection plans in Seward and Carlisle have been set. The public meeting in Carlisle will be held on Wednesday, March 11th and the public meeting in Seward will be held on Monday, March 16th. Zachary will assist the town with getting out publicity prior to the meetings.

Thinking About Maps

At the January meeting, Zachary will give a presentation to the committee on mapping options the Schoharie County Planning Department can offer with its GIS system. The committee will then discuss the types of maps it will need. The committee plans to have maps available at the public meetings.

Inventories Reaching Completion

The Town of Seward's committee has finalized its inventory of agriculture in the town. The Town of Carlisle committee is still revising their inventory and it should be ready to be finalized soon.

Review of Regulations

Seward has provided Laura with a copy of their local ordinances for AFT to review. Zach will provide Laura with a hard copy of Seward's zoning law. Carlisle still needs to give Laura a copy of their local ordinances.

Next Steps

Complete Interviews/*February*
Interview Summary/*February/March*

Decide What to Show on Maps/*January-February*
Discussion of Soils/*February*
Create Maps/*February*
Review Maps/*February*
Public Meetings/*March*
Assess Public Input/*March*
Draft Goals for Plan/*March-April*

Next Seward/Carlisle Joint Executive Committee Meeting: January 26th, 2009

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