



Progress Report

9/1/09

Town of Wright, Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

Next Meeting: September 23, 2009, 7:00 PM, Wright Town Hall, Gallupville, NY

Note: Change of Date for October Meeting, new date is 10/29/09

Mapping

The agriculture and farmland plan committee continues to fine tune the map of active agricultural lands to increase its legibility. The county also provided the committee with maps showing soils, wetlands, and slope. Some revisions were made to these maps as well. Another map was requested highlighting active agricultural land on prime soil not included in an agricultural district. The county will also supply the committee with an aerial map. The active agricultural lands map will be included in the body of the plan. The other maps will most likely appear in the appendix with the exception of the soil map, a location for which has not been decided.

One point of concern was that mapping information regarding the location of gas pipelines that run through town was not available from the county. The committee plans to include a recommendation in the plan that information regarding the location of the pipelines be made available to both the county and the town to inform land use decisions.

Another concern emerged when the maps indicated that the northwest quadrant of the town contains a significant amount of prime soil that is being actively farmed that is not included in an agricultural district. The committee will include a recommendation in the plan that these landowners be approached by the town and educated regarding the benefits of being included in an agricultural district. If the landowners decide to apply the town will help facilitate the application.

Economic Impact Study

Lillian Bruno, planner for the Schoharie County Planning Department Agency (SCPDA) Michele Strobeck, SCPDA agriculture marketing specialist, and David Cox, agriculture program leader for Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schoharie County are continuing work on the economic impact study. Revisions have been made to the narrative and statistics on agriculture in the town are now available. Revisions will continue and complete version including the text, the statistics and a graph will be ready for the committee to review at the September meeting.

Prioritizing Agricultural Land

The committee continued their discussion of the prioritization of agricultural land for protection. The committee discussed addressing this issue by identifying prime soils and active farms not in the agricultural district, educating the owners of this land about the benefits of being included in an agricultural district and then helping them with the application process.

Timeline

An application for a one year extension for the planning process has been filed with the New York State Department of Agricultural and Markets. The committee anticipates needing an additional month or two to provide enough time for the revision process.

Draft Plan

The committee continued to review a working copy of the plan and made several revisions. The definition of agriculture used in the town's comprehensive plan will be included in the Definition of Agriculture section and may be substituted for the existing language. Text will be inserted in both the Executive Summary and the Future of Agriculture sections addressing landowners rights. A description of the role and purpose of the plan will be included in the Executive Summary. Comments made by committee members during the public meetings will be included in the section where community input is presented. The committee members are currently conducting a close reading of the section dealing with goals recommendations and at the next meeting will revise and prioritize recommendations made in the plan.

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