

Town of Farmington Agriculture Advisory Committee

February 19, 2009

Meeting Notes

Attending: Pete Maslyn- Chair, Jim Ochterski, Dick McClurg, Don Jones

1) Reporting to Town Planning Board:

Pete M. reported to the Town Planning Board, and the Board seems supportive and encouraged by the Agriculture Advisory Committee's initiatives in the Comprehensive Plan, a Farmland Planning grant application, and studying drainage impacts on farming. The grant applications would need to go through the Town Board, and the Planning Board felt the drainage plan was a stable project but it does need to be addressed.

- The Ag Committee needs to be involved in the Comprehensive Plan update.
- Drainage study worth pursuing
- Conservation easements and farmland protection planning worth pursuing but is low on the list.
- Pete M. reported that the Ag Advisory Committee is ready to act on Planning Board issues.

2) Pursuit of a farmland planning grant

This grant application will require a more active group, and there are some Committee members who are often too occupied with farm and home activities to be active on a planning grant.

Discussed names of people who could be approached for the Committee.

We need a sense of what the application will cover and decide what specific issues would be studied and proposed by a municipal farmland protection plan, using this possible funding source. Jim O. will pursue the grant application and get the process organized to present to the Planning Board and the Town Board.

3) Changes in Agriculture Assessment in Farmington

The Town Assessor would like to come to the March 19 meeting of the Ag Committee to discuss the proposed increase in base agriculture assessment. Right now, the Town of Farmington's base assessment for farmland is the lowest of the area towns at \$1,000 per acre- Assessor is looking to move it to \$1,300 per acre. It would help to have agriculture sales data from elsewhere in the county. The assessor may need some assistance in understanding depreciation in the regard.

Recommendation that the Agriculture Advisory Committee should meet with the assessor immediately and request:

- Try to keep the increase in base agriculture assessment minimized because there is relatively little farmer-owned ag land in the Town. Need to support farming because it is still a tax profit to the town.

4) Updates on additional Agriculture Advisory discussion from the past few months

Discussion of general Farmington development issues and projects - FL Race Track, wind development, Great Lakes Kraut, milk prices, and tax issues in the state.

4) Farm development in Farmington:

Discussion of horse farms, need for composting facilities.

Discussion of GL Kraut announcement of possible closure, and efforts being made to retain this facility.

Greg Atwood suggested that the Town should adopt guidelines regarding wind farm development and make sure zoning is at least receptive to windmills. Exploration may be starting due to geography and proximity to transmission services around the Rochester metro region.

5) Next meeting: Scheduled for February 19, 2009; 7:30 PM Town of Farmington Hall