

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAY 15, 2014**

The following minutes are written as a summary of the main points that were made and the actions taken at the Town of Farmington Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting.

Committee Members Present:

Peter Maslyn, *Chairperson*
Henry Adams
John Marvin

Also Present:

Greg Atwood

1. MEETING OPENING

Mr. Maslyn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Adams, seconded by Mr. Marvin, that the minutes of the April 23, 2014, meeting be approved.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

3. INVENTORY OF CURRENT AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS

Committee members reviewed five hard-copy Agricultural Operations maps prepared by Lu Engineers. Mr. Maslyn noted that he did not receive electronic versions of the maps as had been requested and therefore was not able to provide them to the committee members and interested citizens via e-mail in advance of tonight's meeting.

Committee members noted that the number of categories of land uses on the maps was greater than the categories they had originally identified at the February 20, 2014, meeting, i.e.:

- 1) Dairy/Livestock
- 2) Field Crops and Vegetables
- 3) Fruit
- 4) Nursery
- 5) Horses
- 6) Other Agricultural Uses

They questioned some of the additional categories (such as “Field Crops and Horses” and “Field Crops and Woods”) and asked how they were derived and why they have been included on the maps?

Mr. Adams questioned the designation of “Farmland of Statewide Importance” and asked why current residential and other developed land had been designated as “Prime Farmland If Drained”? He said that it was doubtful that developed land would revert back to agricultural uses.

Mr. Atwood noted that the many categories shown on the maps are confusing to interpret and suggested that fewer categories would bring the maps more in line with the assessor’s designations of all agricultural land uses as “farmland.”

3. DISCUSSION OF TOWN-WIDE DRAINAGE DISTRICT

Mr. Atwood asked about the need for a town-wide drainage district and if its creation would add appreciably to the acreage of useable farmland in the Town. It was the consensus of the committee members present that a town-wide drainage district would not reclaim or provide very much new farmland but that some drainage work could improve existing farmland.

Mr. Maslyn said that the committee’s charge is to determine if there is a need for a town-wide drainage district and where the need for drainage work is the greatest. Mr. Adams said that the committee’s input would be provided to the engineers for development of drainage priorities in the Town.

Mr. Atwood said that a separate board with the ability to identify priorities and with the authority to implement the drainage work should be established if a town-wide drainage district is created.

Mr. Adams said that a district might enable the Town to mitigate smaller drainage concerns so as not to create more significant drainage issues downstream.

Committee members questioned the cost of a drainage district. Mr. Marvin gave an example of a drainage district in Macedon, N.Y., which amounted to less than \$1 per thousand on his property at the time. Mr. Atwood said that the main reason for creation of a district would be for the Town to generate tax funds for implementation. Mr. Maslyn said the district would also enable Town personnel and equipment to enter onto private property to correct drainage problems. Mr. Adams and Mr. Marvin said that the impetus for creation of a district seems to be State and Federal regulations that are placing new and costly mandates upon the Town.

Mr. Adams said that although the concept of an overall drainage plan could be a benefit to the Town, the committee lacks the details on the costs and scope of the drainage district at this time. Mr. Marvin said that information is needed on the benefits that the district would provide versus its cost. Mr. Maslyn said that the committee would need to review a well-prepared plan that shows where the drainage waters would travel after they

leave the Town’s boundaries. He noted that a drainage plan that had been presented years ago did not address this. Mr. Adams said that farmland located near a waterway could benefit from the improvement and cleaning of existing drainage channels.

Mr. Maslyn then read into the minutes the text of a statement from Jim Ochterski of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County:

“I support the approach of identifying and mapping specific agriculture drainage situations in the Town of Farmington prior to making a decision or recommendation about a proposed town-wide drainage district. We simply need more specific information about the location and nature of persistent agriculture drainage concerns. Placed onto a Farmington map, this information could be a pivotal element of a good decision, something we can all look back on respectfully. There will be temporary drainage issues occurring now due to excessive precipitation. We need to know where valuable productive land is flooding unnecessarily.

“We would be wise to include some form of representation from adjacent downstream municipalities that could be affected, taking their concerns into consideration. It would not slow down the process and could head off future impediments.

“In my view, agriculture producers would support a good drainage plan for the Town. My understanding is that the previous plan was not optimal for agriculture interests.”

—Jim Ochterski

It was the consensus of the committee members present that more information about the scope and costs of a district are needed at this time.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

The next meeting of the Farmland Protection Plan Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, May 20, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. at the Farmington Town Hall.

Following the meeting, Mr. Robortella secured the building.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Robortella L.S.