

## **Dutchess County Agricultural Advisory Committee**

November 28, 2018, 10:00 A.M.

Dutchess County Farm & Home Center, 2715 Route 44, Millbrook, NY

### **MINUTES**

**Present:** Mark Adams, Harry Baldwin, Mark Condon, Isaac Coon, Jennifer Fimbel, Shelby Frangk, Mary Ann Johnson, Gregg Pulver, Stephanie Radin, Brian Scoralick, Rebecca Thornton, and Eoin Wrafter.

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Eoin announced that Chairman Sabellico is unable to attend the meeting. As the Acting Chairman, Eoin opened the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

The May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted by the committee. The August 23<sup>rd</sup> (Ag Forum) meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted by the committee, with two minor changes.

#### **Housekeeping Items**

Eoin discussed the need for a vice-chairman in the event that the Chairman is not available. Eoin asked that anyone interested in the role of Vice Chairman of the committee to please send an email to both himself and Shelby. He noted that our February 2019 meeting can act as a reorganizational meeting and the Chairman and Vice Chairman can be elected then. Eoin also mentioned that some member's terms have expired or will be expiring, and the committee will be seeking reappointment of these members; they are: Mark Adams, Isaac Coon, Gregg Pulver, and Rebecca Thornton. Eoin also has to verify the required terms (if any) of ex-officio members – it has been suggested that a term limit may not be necessary since they are affiliated with a title and/or agency. If so, these members may remain on the committee and the 2019 appointment letters will reflect this change. 2019 Oaths of Office will also be completed at the February meeting.

#### **Agricultural Advisory Committee Forum Recap**

The committee agreed that the format change of the forum (group presentation and individual update presentations from committee members) was positive and upheld the original intent of the event. The committee also noted that the presentation from the Harlem Valley Farm & Food Alliance was well-received and presented an opportunity to further the public presence of the group. Eoin mentioned that part of the group's presentation focused on the challenges they have had with signage for their farms/farm stands; since the event, County Planning is coordinating with the group to create a signage plan (akin to the Dutchess County Wine Trail) to help the public navigate to their farms.

The group discussed next year's forum and it was requested that those members who did not provide updates at the forum last year to present this upcoming year. A potential speaker topic for next year could be agricultural education.

#### **Agriculture Navigator Updates**

Eoin announced that Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County has once again been selected for the Agricultural Navigator contract. It is a one-year contract with two one-year extensions. The contract now stipulates that at least 50% (or half) of work time must be dedicated to fulfilling the tasks of the Ag Navigator role.

Jen handed out a listing of the tasks that she has been working on since July (attached). Highlights include:

- Jen noted that the Hudson Valley Lamb Challenge did not come to fruition. She would like to keep it in mind for a potential future event.
- She also met with seven educators involved in agriculture via a telephone conference. As a result, an additional meeting was planned with some of the individuals on the call to discuss a plan to create an Agricultural Certificate through Dutchess Community College, which could eventually extend to the entire SUNY system. The

next meeting will be with the Associate Dean of Curriculum of DCC to discuss the feasibility and implementation of this effort.

- Jen attended an “Economic Toolkit for Farmers” training at Muscoot Farm in Katonah. After meeting some individuals at this event, she has been asked to present to the Westchester Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and possibly to the Westchester Planning and Development office in the near future.
- Jen is continuing to update the “Dutchess County Agriculture...It’s a Growing Thing!” Facebook page. Currently, the page has 353 “likes” and 364 followers. The Farm and Ag Report is now on two stations every morning 5 days/week (both AM and FM radio (WKIP and WRWD, respectively)).

### **Training Updates**

Eoin announced that a training was held on October 16<sup>th</sup>, entitled Making your Community More Farm Friendly through Planning and Zoning, and was based on the farm friendly audit that we have been working on. Eoin, Shelby, and Jen were all speakers at this event and focused on the specific ways that communities can enhance their farm friendliness. The [presentation](#) and [accompanying resources](#) are both available on the Dutchess County Planning Federation webpage. Also, a tech memo, providing more in-depth detail of the information presented at the event, as well as the results of the audit, will also be released soon. Individual spreadsheets for each municipality, including the community’s audit results and related zoning code sections will also be released with the tech memo. Mary Ann mentioned that Orange County is looking to further their work with their County’s farm friendly audit and sharing our resources may be helpful to them. Rebecca was curious how many individual Dutchess County municipalities were represented at the training.

### **2019 Initiatives/Priorities**

The group discussed some potential 2019 initiatives for the committee, including:

- Farmland preservation, in general, and related to solar farms/uses
- Fees and Permits for agricultural buildings
- Agricultural economic development, including transition planning, economic/business planning, and processing/warehousing
- Development of a county-wide Right-to-Farm Law
- Thresholds/criteria for agricultural operations versus commercial use

### **Open Discussion**

Stephanie noted that Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County is a partner with American Farmland Trust and Farmlink, and these organizations are providing small grants to their partners (\$15,000 and \$25,000, respectively) to connect farmers with non-farmers and to solidify a Regional Navigator role; it is a regional effort with Westchester, Putnam, Columbia, and Dutchess counties. CCEDC will be applying for these grants.

CCEDC was also awarded a regional grant to oversee and coordinate the [NYS Grown & Certified program](#). An RFP was issued and responses are due back by December 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Next Meeting**

The committee discussed the schedule for the upcoming year and decided on the following dates: February 28<sup>th</sup>, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, August 22<sup>nd</sup> (Ag Forum), and November 21<sup>st</sup>. As discussed, the next meeting will be **February 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in the Director’s Room at the Dutchess County Farm and Home Center.**

Meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Shelby Frangk, Planner  
Dutchess County Planning and Development