

## **Dutchess County Agricultural Advisory Committee**

November 21, 2019, 10:00 A.M.

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

### **DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present:** Mark Adams, Doug Giles, Stephanie Radin, Matthew Sabellico, Brian Scoralick, Rebecca Thornton, Harry Baldwin, Shelby Frangk, Jennifer Fimbel, and Eoin Wrafter.

**Absent:** Mark Condon, Isaac Coon, Todd Erling, John Lekic, Gregg Pulver, and Leon Vehaba.

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Sabellico opened the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

The May and August meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted by the committee.

#### **Housekeeping Items**

Eoin discussed the 2020 committee membership with the group. He explained that three members' terms – Leon Vehaba, John Lekic, and Matt Sabellico – will expire at the end of the year. Eoin noted that the County Executive has requested that Matt continue in his role as chair; Matt stated that would be happy to continue in this role. Leon and John will be contacted about their 2020 membership on the committee. Eoin added that there has been interest from others to join the committee, so future discussions will be occurring about the 2020 committee members.

#### **Ag Forum Recap**

The group agreed that the 2020 Ag Forum seemed to be well-received by attendees, felt the format/seating arrangement worked well, and thought that the ceremonial signing of the Right-to-Farm Law added a special note to the festivities. Committee members also liked this year's speakers, Carolyn Meagher and Darrell Aubertine, finding their discussions to be informative and relevant. As a follow-up to this year's presentations, a potential speaker for next year could be GrowNYC, which is the arm within New York City government that works on farmers' market/food distribution.

#### **Agriculture Navigator Updates**

Jen noted some of the tasks that she has been working on since our last meeting. Highlights include:

- Met with staff from Senator Serino's office, DC Department of Behavioral and Community Health, Assemblyman Lawlor's office, NYS Ag and Markets, and LaGrange Town Supervisor, Alan Bell, to determine how to address the concerns of residents regarding health risks from the smell of local hemp, including consistent messaging in response to these kinds of concerns. It was recommended that if residents are feeling health effects that they perceive to be related to hemp, they are encouraged to visit their physician; if widespread health effects are being experienced by residents, the DC Department of Behavioral and Community Health can be consulted.
- Reviewed the Town of Pawling's and Town of Clinton's proposed zoning changes pertaining to hobby and commercial agriculture for DC Planning.
- Working on a "Dairy Dialogues" program with NY Animal Agriculture. DCC has offered their facilities to host this program with farmers, FFA members, and 4-H members. A two-hour question-and-answer session, a Meet-the-Farmer program, and a short video about modern dairy farming are among some of the sessions being planned; dates are to be determined.
- Attended a presentation of the NYS Officer FFA team at John Jay High School related to their conditional FFA Chapter designation. In coordination with the FFA program, the next step at John Jay is to loop school guidance staff in to ensure that these programs can and will succeed. Rhinebeck, Red Hook, Arlington, and Dover have also expressed interest in FFA programs.

- Was asked to speak to the Beekman Fire Commissioners' about the fire tax and if it could be reduced for ag land (not including buildings). Jen is also working with DC Real Property Tax Service Agency to present the impact of a reduction on ag lands on all residents in the Town.
- She added that daily posts are made to "Dutchess County Agriculture...It's A Growing Thing<sup>SM</sup> Facebook Page (441 followers). The Dutchess County Agriculture It's a Growing Thing<sup>SM</sup> Instagram page has reached 204 followers.

### **Education Sub-Committee**

Shelby explained that she was speaking with Mark Condon and Rebecca Cossa (DC BOCES Ag Teacher) at the end of the Ag Forum and Rebecca expressed a desire to have her students participate in the Ag Advisory Committee. Upon further discussion of this idea, an Ag Advisory Committee sub-committee which would focus solely on education was posed. This idea was very well-received by the group. The group mentioned that Mark Condon could act as a liaison between the two entities and could also chair this sub-committee; he will be contacted to determine his interest in serving in these roles. Other members could include Rebecca Cossa, a representative from SUNY Cobleskill, and FFA and 4-H members, among others. More work will be done related to the development of this sub-committee in the coming year.

### **2020 Initiatives/Priorities**

The group discussed potential 2020 initiatives/priorities. Ideas included economic development and discussions related to a regional distribution/wholesale center, as well as youth in agriculture and continuing to foster educational pathways for students interested in agriculture.

### **Open Discussion**

Eoin demonstrated the new internal, beta [Agricultural Resources Inventory Application \(ARIA\)](#), a searchable application which includes descriptions and contact information for a variety of agricultural entities, as well as virtual food hubs. Organized by desired topic, this application will aid farmers, producers, the public, and municipal officials in navigating and further utilizing these agricultural resources. Planning Department staff have been working with the County Computer Division on the development of this application and Planning Department staff will be providing updates to these resources on a rolling basis, but we will also do a holistic review on an annual basis. Eoin mentioned that future iterations of the application may include social media links and the ability to download a selected set of resources (as a pdf).

Eoin also showed the group the new [County Right-to-Farm Law webpage](#) and demonstrated other GIS applications that the County has available to the public, including [ParcelAccess](#), [DC Parks & Trails](#), [Aerial Access](#), and [Traffic Data](#).

### **2020 Meeting Schedule**

The dates proposed for the 2020 meeting schedule are February 27<sup>th</sup>, May 28<sup>th</sup>, August 27<sup>th</sup> (Ag Forum), and November 19<sup>th</sup>. This schedule will be posted to the website in the coming year. The group discussed that another meeting may be necessary between the May meeting and August Forum, but that can be determined as the dates become closer.

Meeting adjourned at 11:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Shelby Frangk, Planner  
Dutchess County Planning and Development