

Dutchess County Agricultural Advisory Committee

June 7, 2021, 12:30 p.m.

Virtual Teams Meeting

MINUTES

Present: Mark Adams, Matt Cady, Mark Condon, Todd Erling, Deanna Mancuso, Gregg Pulver, Stephanie Radin, Brian Scoralick, Becky Thornton, Jennifer Fimbel, Eoin Wrafter, and Shelby Frangk.

Not Present: Isaac Coon, Doug Giles, Harry Baldwin, and Matthew Sabellico.

Introductions

In Chair Matt Sabellico's absence, Vice Chair Becky Thornton welcomed everyone to the meeting. All board members introduced themselves.

Adoption of Minutes – March 11, 2021

The March 11th meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted by the committee.

Agricultural Navigator Updates

Jen noted some of the tasks that she has been working on for the past few months (March – May). Highlights during this period included:

- She attended two John Jay FFA Advisory Committee meetings. She noted that the group will host their inaugural banquet this coming week and Gregg Pulver will be the keynote speaker.
- She is a member of Congressman Delgado's Ag Advisory Committee and attends those meetings, as does Todd Erling.
- Jen received a call from a filmmaker who expressed interest in making a film in the Hudson Valley. Jen discussed local agriculture with the filmmaker and connected them with Dutchess County Tourism, Inc. for more information.
- She gave a presentation to a class from Vassar College on the Ag Navigator program and her role at CCEDC, and explained how both positions relate to climate change and carbon sequestration by farmers.
- Jen has been working with the Department of Behavioral & Community Health to get farm workers vaccinated. Local farms may be contacted as potential host locations.
- She reviewed the Town of Pawling's proposed zoning regulations concerning agriculture for DC Planning.
- Jen has received several calls (21) regarding questions related to ag district inclusion and ag value assessment.
- Jen is also helping to identify potential Dutchess County locations for a slaughterhouse. This interested party has the financial means to put this type of use into practice. She is waiting to hear back from Th!nkDutchess Business Alliance for additional guidance for the individual.
- She is also continuing to update the "Dutchess County Agriculture...It's a Growing Thing!" Facebook page, the Dutchess County Agriculture Instagram page, and conducting the Farm and Ag Report on two stations every morning 5 days/week (both AM and FM radio (WKIP and WRWD, respectively).

Student Member on the AAC and Education Sub-Committee Discussion

Mark Condon explained that the wheels are in motion for a student member to be added to the Ag Advisory Committee. Rebecca Cossa and Mark worked together to create a draft process, which requires applicants to submit an application, a personal statement, a series of recommendations, and a résumé/CV to the Education Sub-Committee; parents or guardians will be required to sign-off on the student's participation. The Education Sub-Committee will make student recommendations to the Ag Advisory Committee who will then make recommendations to the County Executive. It is proposed that two students will be added to the committee – this will help with continuity if one student is a senior and will be leaving the group the following year. Mark and Rebecca will be writing up this proposal for Ag Advisory Committee members to review, and based on the feedback received, a recommendation to adopt these positions will be

sent to the County Executive for his consideration. The goal is to have the two youth positions filled by the 2021 Ag Forum.

Farming in Dutchess Virtual Series Update

Eoin noted that the Social/Land Development Pressures series has been difficult to set a final date for as speakers have been hard to secure and panelist schedules have not been lining up. We have been able to secure Robert Ferris, a local farmer and realtor, to provide the real estate perspective on the panel. The session will not be able to take place in mid-June as planned and will have to be pushed back; a final date/time has yet to be determined.

Mark Condon noted that planning for the Ag Education session is underway. He has already reached out to several individuals to be part of the working group for this session and also to potential speakers. Speakers will consist of informal and formal educators, as well as students in and administrators of agricultural education programs and farmers. The goal is to have this session in early- or mid-July.

Mark Adams offered to spearhead the local food session. Shelby will reach out to Jen and Mark Adams off-line about the planning and preparation of this session. The hope is to have this session scheduled for the summer, as well.

Thinking ahead for the food security session, Jen suggested contacting Dutchess Outreach, Poughkeepsie Farm Project, and Willow Roots Farm, among others, for input on this session. Mark Condon suggested we reach out to Lacey Riley from Dutchess Community College for her expertise, as well. Todd added that MaryAnn and Erica could contribute to this session based on their work with the FeedHV program.

Jen explained that she has noticed a need for more education and guidance to the public about homesteading and backyard farming. She said that technical and zoning-related inquiries about these subjects have been steadily increasing over time but intensified during the pandemic. The group agreed that this is a need and discussed options for a position of this nature, including the creation of a brand-new position or dividing the responsibilities between existing CCEDC employees. While the specifics of the position and its creation require more planning, the group agreed that this role could have wellness/health and educational aspects; both of which would help to expand the pool of potential funding sources. Mark Condon noted that the development of this role could be supported by Dutchess Community College. The group agreed to keep discussing this need.

Open Discussion

Eoin spoke with Andy Imperati (DC Ag Society) and we will be able to have the Ag Forum in-person at the fairgrounds this year. It will be Thursday, August 26th at 8 a.m. and will be focused on the takeaways/lessons learned from the sessions of the virtual series.

Next Meeting

Eoin noted that another meeting will likely be needed before the August Ag Forum to discuss planning and preparation for the event. Shelby will send a poll to gauge everyone's availability for the end of July/early August.

Meeting adjourned at 1:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Shelby Frangk, Planner
Dutchess County Planning and Development