

## **Dutchess County Agricultural Advisory Committee**

March 30, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

Virtual Teams Meeting

### **DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present:** Mark Adams, Matt Cady, Isaac Coon, Mark Condon, Stephanie Radin, Matt Sabellico, Brian Scoralick, Becky Thornton, Harry Baldwin, Jennifer Fimbel, Shelby Frangk, and Eoin Wrafter.

**Not Present:** Todd Erling, Doug Giles, Deanna Mancuso, and Gregg Pulver.

#### **Introductions**

Chair Matt Sabellico welcomed everyone to the meeting. All board members introduced themselves.

#### **Adoption of Minutes – December 16, 2021**

The December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted by the committee.

#### **2022 Farming in Dutchess Virtual Series Planning**

At our December 2021 committee meeting, the group decided to conduct another Farming in Dutchess virtual series in fall 2022. Session topics will be:

- Ag Education Part #2
  - School superintendents should be included on the outreach for this session.
- Conservation easements and PDR programs
  - This session should be landowner focused.
- Ag value assessment vs. Ag Districts programs, and an overview of each program
- Regenerative farming (soils health) and the diversity of agriculture
- The New Look of Farming – Urban and New & Beginning Farmers

Additional planning and preparation for these sessions will take place at the committee's next meeting in March. The goal is to have the days, times, and speakers for these sessions solidified by August so advertising can take place at the Ag Forum. A lesson learned from the 2021 series is to advertise for these sessions early and often to ensure maximum participation. Committee members were asked to send any ideas for potential speakers to Shelby.

#### **Student Member on the AAC and Education Subcommittee Discussion**

Mark Condon announced that there were three applicants who applied to be youth members on the AAC. The Education Subcommittee unanimously recommended Cailin Halladay and Jenna Franco to be the committee's senior and junior youth members, respectively. Committee members discussed each applicant's application, resume, and recommendations, and agreed with the assessment and recommendations of the Education Subcommittee. Eoin will communicate the AAC's decision to the County Executive who will then decide whether to appoint these members to the committee\*. As an aside, the group also discussed moving committee meetings to evenings to accommodate the new youth members.

*\*Cailin and Jenna were officially appointed to the AAC in April 2022.*

#### **Agricultural Navigator Updates**

Jen noted some of the tasks that she has been working on for the past few months (Jan – March 2022) (document attached herein). Highlights during this period included:

- Continued discussions about a potential Dutchess County slaughterhouse.
- Worked with American Farmland Trust on a series of forums for landowners.
- Discussed hay and fertilizer issues (i.e. cost impacts) with local farmers.
- Continues 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)).

Jen also announced to the group that the 2022 Agriculture Breakfast is taking place on April 22<sup>nd</sup> in person at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds. All committee members were encouraged to contact Francheska at CCE Dutchess to sign up to participate.

Eoin noted that CCE Dutchess responded to the County’s Request-for-Proposals (RFP) for the Ag Navigator position and was once again awarded the contract, which will be a one-year contract subject to four (4) additional annual extensions.

### **Open Discussion**

Jen noted that she has been approached by local farmers regarding the shortage of farmworkers and the lack of farmworker housing in our area. Committee members discussed these issues further. It was noted that there are Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Coronavirus Funds that can be used to either improve or construct farmworker housing; farmers should contact their municipalities for more information on this funding and to learn how to apply.

The group also discussed the idea of creating connections between food producers, and potentially among area farm-to-school programs, to combat local and regional food insecurity. Members agreed to keep this initiative in mind as a potential committee priority in the future.

Eoin also mentioned that DC Planning staff has an informative conversation with the Center for Agricultural Development & Entrepreneurship (CADE). They expressed interest in becoming more familiar with Dutchess County farms and farmers, and providing more opportunities for them to become familiar with CADE. Eoin announced to the group that he thought Phoebe would be a good presenter for the Ag Forum this year. CADE’s website can be found here: <https://www.cadefarms.org/>

### **Next Meeting**

A Doodle poll will be sent to committee members, including the two new youth members, to coordinate the next (June/July 2022) meeting. 2022 meetings will either be virtual, in-person, or hybrid depending on members’ preferences and the state of the pandemic.

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Shelby Frangk, Planner  
Dutchess County Planning and Development

Jennifer Fimbel  
Ag Navigator  
DC Ag Advisory Board Bullets  
January – March 2022

### **January 3 – February 22, 2022**

- Meetings and Activities (Virtual and otherwise):
  - Submitted the Ag Navigator RFP to the County (awarded to us)
  - Congressman Del Gado's Ag Advisory meeting (1)
  - Slaughterhouse possibility continued discussion
  - Agritourism work group meeting (1)
  - Attended virtual AFT Regional Navigator program meeting
  - Working with AFT on a land-owners series of forums
  - Attended the Hudson Valley CSA conference
  - Assisted 1 town with specific issues concerning agriculture
  - Attended John Jay FFA Advisory meeting (1)

#### Calls/Emails (51)

- Ag District, Ag Value Assessment questions (5)
  - COVID-19 and special exemption forms (3)
  - Plans for feeding livestock efficiently (1)
  - Hay and fertilizer issues for 2022 (3)
  - Municipal Officials (1)
  - General Ag questions (28)
- DC Ag...It's A Growing Thing! Facebook continuously updated
  - Recorded 35 Radio spots
  - 1 Vacation Day

### **February 23 – March 24, 2022**

- Meetings and Activities (Virtual and otherwise):
  - Meeting w/DCC Staff concerning collaborative programming
  - Historical Agriculture discussion for Pine Plains celebration
  - Assisted 1 and 2 farmers with specific town issues concerning agriculture
  - AFT Solar webinar
  - Millbrook Rotary presentation (18 in attendance)
  - Discussion w/Rhinebeck & Red Hook about their interest in an FFA program
  - Attended John Jay FFA Advisory meeting (1)

#### Calls/Emails (51)

- Ag District, Ag Value Assessment questions (7)
  - Hay and fertilizer issues for 2022 (4)
  - Municipal Officials (1)
  - General Ag questions (42)
- DC Ag...It's A Growing Thing! Facebook continuously updated
  - Recorded 15 Radio spots