

Bethel- Liberty Farmland Protection Planning Committee Meeting
Wednesday November 12, 2008.

Jill: The main focus tonight is to pick a date for the public meetings.

1. Surveys:

Surveys were mailed out 11/3/08. Deadline to return them is 11/18/08.

Farmer Surveys:

We sent 416 to farmers, and we have received about 40 so far.

Joe Walsh is working on a radio PSA to encourage people to return them.

If you see farmers, please remind them to send them back.

Callicoon and Delaware made up a flyer to put around their towns, about the public information meetings. We can modify it for your towns.

Q: Do you have a list of those who have responded?

A: No, it's anonymous. We are tracking respondents who provide return addresses, but very few have been doing this. You have the list of all recipients, so if you see farmers, you can ask them if they've returned their surveys.

Agri-Service Surveys:

We have received about 15 of the roughly 95 agri-service surveys that went out. We added a few to the original list of 88, based on your suggestions.

Some of the businesses who received the survey are regional, so they might respond at a lower rate than local businesses. If we don't get a good response from these regional businesses, Julie (OSI Intern) can call and follow up with them, asking them for any thoughts on Sullivan County as a part of their business clientele.

If you stop by any of the businesses, please ask them to send the survey in. And if you talk to any businessperson who hasn't received a survey but should have, please let us know and we can send one to him/ her.

Restaurants and specialty shops:

Julie has been calling them and giving us a summary of each phone interview. We hope to put these into a format that can be analyzed.

2. Informational Meetings:

Q: What is the purpose of the meeting?

A: We will quickly summarize some preliminary survey results, but the main purpose of the public meeting is to get public input. We want to know what role they want to play, and what they envision for the future of agriculture in their towns. The meeting will help to strengthen the plan, and solidify public buy-in.

One meeting is for the general public to voice their issues and ideas about farmland preservation, and one is for farmers. Nan anticipates about 2 hours for the public meeting, and 1-½ hours for the farmers. Callicoon and Delaware chose Saturday, December 13, for both the public meeting (10 am) and the farmers focus group (1 pm). They're providing light refreshments for the public meeting and lunch for the farmers.

Discussion: General support for a Saturday setup like the other group's.

Discussion: It would be ideal to get more farmers' input on the date and time, and other matters. Reminder that any farmer who wants to come is welcome.

Meeting Date: January 10 (January 24 snow date).

Location: Cooperative Extension.

Paul: I will talk to Joe Walsh about the date.

Time: 1 pm for farmers. 10 am for public.

Discussion of food:

Maybe buy heroes or sub sandwiches; perhaps use some local produce for the farmers' meeting.

Catskill Harvest Market is close and can provide food.

Heinrich: I will follow up with CHM for suggestions and prices.

Publicity:

Jill: Julie put together two press releases, one for the public and one for the farmers, and I will give you copies of them.

Jill: Paul and Joe went through the list of farmers to separate actual farmers from those recipients who rent land to farmers, etc. We can follow up with the farmers, and encourage them to come.

Lynn: I will find Liberty farmers' telephone numbers and call them.

Dave: I will find numbers and call the Bethel farmers.

Discussion of newspaper inserts for the public. Catskill Shopper is reasonably priced, probably under \$100 for 1000 inserts. We can target the relevant zip codes.

Lynn: I will call the Shopper to get the zips and find out pricing.

Bill: I can get you zips from our GIS staff if you can't get them from the Shopper.

So, the public will have a press release, and the farmers will get a newspaper insert and a follow-up phone call.

Q: Should people RSVP?

A: We can suggest that they RSVP.

We can send out the press release to our email lists (who?)

Jill: I will check with Joe, to see if the PSAs mention the public meetings, or just the surveys.

Jill: We will meet one more time before the public meeting.

Jill: I will email you the flyer and press release.

Next committee meeting is December 16 at 7 pm.

To Do:

Paul: Talk to Joe Walsh about the date.

Heinrich: Talk to CHM for suggestions and prices on food.

Lynn: Find Liberty farmers' telephone numbers and call them.

Dave Biren: Find numbers and call the Bethel farmers.

Lynn: Call the Catskill Shopper to get the zips and find out pricing.

Jill: Revise the flyer for Bethel and Liberty, and distribute it to you via email.

Jill: Email flyer and press release to committee members.

Heinrich: We can send out the press release to our email lists.

Jill: Contact Joe Walsh about content of public service announcements.