

Callicoon & Delaware Farmland Protection Plan Committee Meeting, 3/19/09

Present:

Virginia Andkjar	Linda Babicz
Tom Bose	Alice Diehl
John Gain	Stefan Gieger
Wes Gillingham	Paul Hahn
Tanya Hahn	Sonja Hedlund
Joe Horak	Jim Hughson
Melinda Ketcham	Earl Myers
Jim Scheutzow	Nan Stolzenburg
Jill Weyer	Jennifer Mall

1. Review of the Work Timeline

- a. First step is data gathering
- b. Second step is developing a vision statement and goals (we're here now)
- c. Third step is developing strategies to attain the vision

2. Review and Discussion of the First Draft of the Vision Statement

a. The Vision Statement was created from the workshop input, survey data, and interviews. It is a long-term vision, which might seem very hard to achieve, but it's necessary to guide us with developing goals and strategies. It's not quite the same as a mission statement, which is more goal-oriented. It's a description of the ultimate end-state we hope to attain.

b. It will help to guide Town officials in decision making.

1. For example, when the Town of Callicoon's Comprehensive Plan is updated, the Farmland Protection Plan will become a part of the updated Comp Plan

2. Land use decisions happen at the Town level, and the County can help with programming (through the Planning Dept., IDA, and SC Partnership)

3. The County's Strategic Plan (Sullivan 2020) already includes farmland protection measures, which will support the town FPPs

4. The County-wide Farmland Protection Plan will be updated next year, so if your town FPPs are complete, the issues they address will also be included in the updated County-wide FPP

c. Discussion of how specific we want the Vision Statement to be. It should describe what we want to accomplish, but not how (that comes later, in the strategies).

1. Suggestion that the Vision Statement use stronger language about making officials recognize, acknowledge and advocate for agriculture

2. Discussion of dairy farming: It is the backbone of our County's agricultural production and should be mentioned specifically in the Vision Statement

3. Discussion of taxes: This is a big concern among farmers and farmland owners: Should tax minimization be mentioned specifically? Is it implied when we mentioned financial stability? Maybe this should go into the Goals section instead.

3. Discussion of Goals

a. The Goals should be put in more active, directive, future-oriented terms.

1. For example, "Our Town is a desirable location for young farmers and farm entrepreneurs" should read "Make our Town a desirable location for young farmers and farm entrepreneurs."

b. Discussion of the Content of the Goals

1. We should mention not only keeping active farms in production, but also returning idle farmlands to production.

2. Separately from farm production, we should stress the goal of protecting farms for the open space they provide.

3. We should address marketing and branding.

4. In addition to making farm products available to residents, we should mention ensuring that they are available to businesses and schools.

5. Regarding communication and technology, we should specify that they not only exist but are accessible and useful to farmers.

6. We should stipulate that processing facilities are local and convenient, and serve to sustain farm operations.

4. Questions and Discussion

a. Possible ways to keep farmers informed of the process, and get their input:

1. If we hold another farmer focus group, we should wait until we have identified some action steps (maybe in the fall?).

2. We could mail the Vision Statement and Goals to farmers, and get their input.

3. Maybe put them into the CCE newsletter

4. Maybe another radio show-- perhaps the Thunder 102 Roundtable, which has many listeners

5. Put the Vision and Goals in the newspaper

b. Discussion of the mapping process:

1. The maps that Nan and Don are developing will be analyzed in conjunction with zoning, infrastructure, and other land characteristics. This helps with prioritizing the parcels for protection.

2. The ranking system that is developed will help us to secure funds for farmland protection as those funds become available (the State wants to see that we have an objective way to prioritize parcels).

3. The maps also help to guide our ideas and enable us to be creative.

c. Discussion of ways to generate more farmland protection strategies:

1. American Farmland Trust specializes in this work. Perhaps a speaker could come and relate some ideas, through case studies and other experiences.

2. Decision to hold off on this until we have a better idea of our own vision and goals.

5. Next Steps

a. Nan and Don will make a map using the Draft LESA ranking system, so that we can see what parcels would be prioritized and decide how to change the ranking system to fit our needs.

b. Nan will draft a second version of the Vision Statement and Goals, based on our discussion tonight.

6. Preparation for April meeting

1. **Committee members:** Using the Draft LESA ranking system as a guide, think about how to define important farmlands (physical, cultural, historic characteristics, development pressure, etc.).

2. **Committee members:** Send suggested changes to the LESA to Planning by April 3. (Call us at 807-0527, e-mail jill.weyer@co.sullivan.ny.us, mail to 100 North St., PO Box 5012, Monticello NY 12701, or fax to 794-5538).

3. **Planning:** Compile suggestions and send them back to the committee prior to April 16.

Next Meeting Thursday, April 16th at 7:00 pm. Location to be determined.