

# **Town of Ulysses Ag Committee**

## **DRAFT MINUTES**

May 26, 2016

7:30-9:20pm

Present: Chaw Chang, Greg Reynolds, Krys Cail, John Gates, Liz Thomas

Absent and excused: John Wertis and Michelle Wright

7:30 pm Call to order and roll call

7:35-7:40 Announcements

- Krys Cail: new fact sheet by Dept. of Ag and NYSERDA on solar leasing, suggesting making them available on website and in the Town Offices.

7:40-7:45 Approval of draft minutes from last meeting

### **Motion to approve minutes from the 5/11/2016 Ag Committee Meeting**

Moved: Mr. Reynolds

Second: Mr. Chang

Cail AYE

Chang AYE

Gates AYE

Reynolds AYE

Wertis ABSENT

Motion carries, minutes approved.

Open issues

7:45-7:55 Review of resolution process and structure.

- General discussion
  - Mr. Chang: written copies of resolutions sent to everyone prior to the meeting
  - Ms. Thomas: resolutions are the formal communication with the Town Board, Michelle can help with drafting resolutions.
  - Resolutions can help clarify what the requested action items are outlined in the resolutions.
  - Using the statement “for the record” it means the minute taker will include them in the minutes.
  - Agendas for Town Boards get full, Ms. Thomas will bring Ag Committee resolutions periodically to Town Board meetings.
  - Communications to the Town Board can be in the form of a memo as well.

7:55-8:00 Resolution re: alternative methodology for creating Land Use/Land cover maps and analysis.

- General discussion of process and logistics of land use data acquisition and method

- Ms. Cail: Farming data collection from the air (the way they collect the land use data) does not look typical in the Town of Ulysses because mixed use fields are not always recognized as agriculture as this form of data collection is meant to recognize mono-cropping. Which is why the data is not accurate in the Ag and Farmland Protection Plan.
- Ms. Thomas: what would this committee do with an updated/more accurate map?
  - Loss of farm land is due to disuse, if there was more accurate data on land use it would be easier for farmers to find what farm land is available for use. When land is for sale in the future this map would help to preserve farm land. If the map could be up to date (i.e. “live”) it could be used as a farmer recruitment tool or a way for farmers to find land.
  - Ms. Thomas: the Town newsletter might be a good vehicle to use as a survey of land owners. Landlink, could be a good resource to retrofit for the committee’s needs.
  - Mr. Reynolds: this topic is a great reason as to why a CCE representative should be on this committee.
  - “Best way to preserve farm land is to use it”
  - Discussion regarding how changes to the map through alternative data acquisition methods would be incorporated into the existing Ag and Farmland Protection Plan.
    - The plan itself is a guiding document, it won’t be changed but complementary/supplementary updated documents could be presented along with it.
    - Develop an alternative map before passing a resolution.
    - Ms. Cail agreed to update the maps for land use based on new housing starts over the past 5 years.
  - Mr. Chang: the resolution passed at the last meeting should be passed on to the zoning committee.

8:00-8:10 Resolution re: focus for Ag land protection based on active ag activity

- *THIS RESOLUTION WAS TABLED per Mr. Chang*

8:10-8:20 Review of Right to Farm resolutions. Re: signs Why? Who will we make request to, and when?

Right to Farm in ag zones: who should we send this to and when?

- Discussion ensues regarding wording of resolution that Mr. Gates drafted.
- Town Highway requests to NYSDOT for signage approval.
- General agreement that this resolution should be tabled and rewritten based on discussion points.

**Motion to accept John Gate’s resolution about the right to farm signs with additional strengthening language utilizing references to the Town Comprehensive Plan and the Ag and Farmland Protection plan as well as the county plan**

Mr. Reynolds proposed a friendly amendment to the resolution.

Moved: Mr. Chang

Second: Ms. Cail

Cail AYE

Chang AYE

Gates

Reynolds

Wertis ABSENT

Motion passes

New business

- a) 8:20-8:55 Discussion of Ag Farmland Protection Plan in regards to Zoning and potential changes to current zoning law.
- Discussion about proposed changes regarding cluster development, lot zoning techniques, transfer of development rights, techniques of farmland protection, and how to communicate with zoning committee and consultants regarding recommendations from the ag committee.
    - Large lot zoning: discussion with general sentiment and committee agreement that it does not protect farmland
    - Density based zoning discussion
    - General sentiment: proposed zoning techniques are more restrictive than the current zoning and will create a situation where borrowing money is made very difficult. Zoning proposed devalues assets making it harder for lending.
    - Fixed area ratio zoning
    - Ag zoning overlay district
    - Incentive zoning
- b) 8:55-9:10 Discussion of Zoning Steering Committee work regarding Agriculture based on minutes of past meetings.
- *THIS DISCUSSION WAS TABLED per Mr. Chang*
  - The last 3 meetings were relevant so focus on that for the 6/9/2016 meeting
- c) 9:10-9:15 Review of any assigned tasks for committee members for next meeting. Requests for additions to agenda.
- Input memo to steering committee
- d) 9:15-9:20 Discussion and decision on assignment of term length
- Discussion of process
  - Term assignments:
    - Cail: 3 year
    - Chang: 2 year
    - Gates: 1 year
    - Reynolds: 3 year
    - Wertis: 2 year

Adjournment