

**Town of Bethlehem  
Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan  
Study Advisory Committee Meeting**



**SUMMARY OF MEETING June 15, 2009**  
**Bethlehem Town Hall Room 101 – 7:00 PM**

**Attendance**

Members:

Tom Gallagher, George Leveille, Stuart Lyman, Nancy Neff, Charles Preska, Timothy Stanton, Giles Wagoner

Staff/Consultants:

Robert Leslie (Town), Deborah Kitchen (Town), Liz Brock (AFT)

Public:

Linda Jasinski, John Mead, Michael Waldenmaier

**Meeting Materials Distributed**

06/15/09 Meeting Agenda

04/20/09 Meeting Summary

06/01/09 Draft Goals and Recommendations

06/01/09 CACC Draft Recommendations - Open Space Needs and Opportunities

**Meeting Summary**

The April 20, 2009 meeting summary was discussed and approved. It will be posted on the Town's website.

**Purpose of Meeting**

Review Draft Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan

Review Draft Implementation Table

**Public Meeting Notice**

Mr. Leslie stated that the CACC will be hosting a public meeting on July 1, 2009 to present and discuss the draft recommendations regarding Open Space Needs and Opportunities. Comments related to the draft report can be submitted to Robert Leslie at [rleslie@townofbethlehem.org](mailto:rleslie@townofbethlehem.org).

**Update on Bethlehem 2020 Report**

Mr. Leveille provided an update on the Bethlehem 2020 report which is scheduled to be presented to the Town Board on Wednesday, July 24, 2009. He noted that the committee looked at Town operations and fiscal planning for the community. The only integration in the report would be a reference to consider the costs and benefits of open space protection and/or acquisition from the generation of public service costs. The committee was focused on long-term revenues and expenditures from the Town and how to create more sustainability in Town operations. The committee was focused on numbers – not land use.

**Review - Draft Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan**

Page 1 - Staff will check to make sure that the statement regarding rights of property owners is consistent with the one that is found in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Page 3 – Include information about agricultural assessments including thresholds of \$10,000 & \$50,000. Consider inserting a statement regarding agricultural assessment and placing details in the appendix.

Page 4 – Confirm the title Albany County Farm Service Agency

Page 4 - ??? 19%

Page 5 – remove numbers of farms and change the title of the table

Page 5 –Albany County Farm Service listed as a source???

Page 5 – The Office of Real Property should be included as a source for obtaining information about agricultural assessments: <http://www.orps.state.ny.us/pamphlet/exempt/agassess.htm>

Page 5 - The Plan should include information about the benefits of enrolling in an agricultural district and the fact that your property can be enrolled if you are renting to a farmer who farms it.

Page 5 – Include a statement that “soils classified as prime in the Town of Bethlehem are not necessarily prime for farming.”

Page 5 – Add text in plan to reflect the change made to the Map Key on the Soils Map.

Page 6 – remove the word that from the last sentence on the page.

Page 7 – correct the zip code for Delmar: 12054

Page 8 – Update title of chart labeled Figure A to read “Land Owned vs. Rented in Albany County”. The word tenure may not be familiar to some individuals.

Page 8 – Replace Level of conversion pressure with Indicators of conversion pressure.

Page 10 – Replace Delmar By pass (NYS route 32) with NYS Route 32 (Delmar Bypass)

Page 10 – Update title of chart labeled Figure D to read “Inventory of Approved Lots/Projects 2000 to 2008”

Page 11 – The numbers shown in chart labeled Figure E do not match those found in Figure D.

Page 12 – Delete Table 4 and insert note to see map X to view location of existing water and sewer services. Make sure documents read Meads Lane not Meads Land.

Page 13 – Robert Leslie will research with the Comptroller the note relating to the minimum amount a single family home needs to be assessed at before it pays its fair share for services. Farmland typically pays for itself because it has a low demand for services.

Page 14 – Relocate Table 5 to section related to prime soils or remove it from the plan.

Page 14 – Amend bullet number 2 to read “Pass a local right-to-farm ordinance to supplement county and state law.”

Page 16 – Insert a return after NYS Town Law and Planning Board member Appointments to be consistent with formatting.

Page 16 – remove the word “recommends” and replace with “states the Planning Board may” in the paragraph related to Planning Board member appointments. Dr. Lyman noted that the following sentence should be added: “The committee recognizes it is the Town Board’s prerogative to make appointments to boards and committees. This committee notes that the only specific group representation mentioned in the section is that of an agricultural member. The Committee supports this concept.

Page 18 – Insert a statement about the Agricultural Landowner Interviews and move the summary to the appendix section. Include a note qualifying the content of the summary – that it includes opinions of the interviewees and interviewer.

Page 19 – Remove the sentence which reads: The Capital Region’s only milk processing plant closed last year.

Page 24 – Is there a summary for the external factors?

Page 27 – Recommendation II b should include ORPS training for Planning Board members.

Page 31 – Recommendation IV a – add the following words to the end of the last sentence: “subject to some review as is current \_\_\_\_\_”

Include a list of potential uses identified during the April 20, 2009 AFPP Committee Meeting

### **Maps**

Modify Soils Map Key to indicate that prime soils may not be prime soils for growing crops.

Modify Agricultural District Map by including a date.

### **Appendix E**

Add the following uses identified during the April 20, 2009 AFPP Committee Meeting to AFT’s Analysis of Existing Town of Bethlehem Zoning Regulations as they Pertain to Agriculture:

Conservancy –including picnic grounds and cottage industries; Garage, commercial storage – to allow for use of existing structures no longer needed for agriculture; Greenhouses – listed as a specific use or included as an agriculture use; Library, museum or art gallery; Restaurant – commercial kitchen and/or “value added kitchen”; Service business – incorporate some of the uses into definition of home occupation, i.e. advertising & mailing, beauty salon.

### **Resources**

A list of resources should be included in the Appendix and include the following:

County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan

Agricultural Districts

Cornell Cooperative Extension

NYS Agriculture & Markets

American Farmland Trust

NY Farm Bureau

USDA Soil & water

Albany County Farm Service Agency

Albany County Market

### **Implementation Table**

List the goals in numeric order (one through five) and chronologically short-term, long term and on-going.

### **Follow-up**

Provide Tim Stanton, Paul Kleinke and Lynn Dente with hard copies of the next version of the Plan.

Update the prioritization table so that it contains the same recommendations listed in the goals and recommendations document.

Generate draft Plan including Ag. Interview, SWOT Analysis, Existing Conditions Narrative, Maps, Draft Goals & Recommendations, Prioritization Table and distribute to Committee Members.

Revise draft and forward to the County Ag & Farmland Protection Board.

Set a date for a Public Hearing.

Obtain a copy of the educational curriculum that is available through Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Compare the County Law Right to Farm Law with those adopted by other communities to find out how they were customized to meet the needs of the community.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

July 1, 2009, 7:00 p.m., Auditorium

CACC Public Meeting to present Draft Open Space Needs & Opportunities Report

August 5, 2009, 7:00 p.m., Auditorium

AFPP Public Meeting to present Draft Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan

Respectfully submitted: Deborah Kitchen