

## Appendix I

### August 5, 2009 Public Meeting Summary

**Bethlehem Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan**  
**August 5, 2009 Public Meeting**  
**Summary of Public Comments**



On the evening of August 5, 2009, the Department of Economic Development and Planning (DEDP), in association with the Agricultural and Farmland Study Advisory Committee hosted a public meeting to present the Draft “Bethlehem Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan” to the community. Approximately 30 attendees (10 of which included Study Advisory Committee members, Town Board members, and Town staff) viewed a presentation by the DEDP and American Farmland Trust, which provided an overview of the Plan’s planning process, goals, recommendations, and implementation. Listed below is a summary of the comments (verbal and written) that were provided during the question and comment period of the public meeting.

**Comment A:**

- Congratulate the Committee for recognizing that the Town Board may appoint a representative from the agricultural community to the Planning Board.
- IDA is looking at various ways to help businesses in the Town. There is potential to establish a Business Development Corporation with IDA assistance. Next IDA meeting could discuss how to assist agricultural businesses.

**Comment B:**

- Discussion of Town’s agricultural activities should not only include field crops but also livestock. Suggestion to provide definition of agricultural products in the Plan.
- Housing development trends towards the RCS School District is a result of the build-out of the Bethlehem School District.

**Comment C:**

- 46% that listed farming as their primary occupation seems high.
- What was the interest in the PDR program?

**Comment D:**

- Responses to primary occupation question most likely a result of a husband or wife claiming they are full-time on the farm while the spouse works to provide benefits.
- Assume the percentage of those listing farming as their primary occupation would be closer to 20%.

**Comment E:**

- Amongst the short term recommendations what would be the order of implementation?

**Comment D:**

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- Did interviewees indicate that farming is dead in the Town of Bethlehem?

**Comment E:**

- New residential development could adhere to buffer regulations that would require increased setback regulations to adjacent agricultural properties. Buffers could help to reduce residential land use and agricultural land use conflicts. Did the Committee consider the use of buffers for new residential developments?

**Comment F:**

- Since Federal and State funds for purchase of development rights (PDR) programs are limited, the Town should consider supporting the funding of a Town PDR program.

**Comment G:**

- Other municipalities have conducted Cost of Community Service studies and/or Build-Out studies during the development of their Plans. Cost of Community Service studies have illustrated that farms and agricultural lands generate more local tax revenue than they cost in services. Did the Study Advisory Committee consider the development of these studies during the development of the Plan?

**Comment H:**

- Cornell Cooperative Extension has a breakdown of cost of community services studies.
- County IDA has funding for agricultural support services.