

Adopted Minutes
Cayuga County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board
Wednesday, January 12, 2022, 10:00 A.M.
Via Conference/Video Call

Board Members Present:

Andrew Dennison (Cayuga County Legislator)
Jennifer Indelicato (Cayuga County Real Property Services, Director)
Steve Lynch (Cayuga County Planning & Economic Development, Director)
Dan Welch (CCE Agriculture Educator Representative)
Dennis Eckel (Agribusiness Representative)
Jeff Ten Eyck (Agricultural Land Preservation Organization Representative)

Others present:

Kari Terwilliger (CCPED Staff to AFPB)

Absent:

Jason Cuddaback, *designee* (Chairperson of the Board of Directors CCSWCD)
Craig Culver (Farmer Representative)
Christopher Gross (Farmer Representative)
Vacant (Farmer Representative) x2

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Kari Terwilliger at approximately 10:00 A.M. with a quorum of members present. Kari reminded the Board that this meeting serves as the annual organizational meeting.

2. Elect a Chair of the Board for 2022

Kari mentioned that historically, the Chair of the Board has been either a farmer or a member that works closely with farmers and that she felt it would be great to have such representation as the Chair again. Kari asked if there was anyone who wanted to serve as Chair or if there were any nominees. The Board briefly discussed appointing Jason Cuddaback as Chair stating that his work with farmers and history on the Board made him a good candidate, but that since he was not present at the meeting to accept a nomination the Board was uncomfortable with appointing him at this time. Dan Welch volunteered to be the Chair for 2022 with the caveat that Jason be nominated for 2023 at next year's meeting. The Board agreed to express to Jason their collective desire for him to serve as Chair in 2023 and accepted Dan's nomination of himself as Chair for 2022. **Steve Lynch made a motion to appoint Dan Welch as Chair of the Cayuga County AFPB for 2022. Motion seconded by Jennifer Indelicato. Motion carried.**

3. Approval of Minutes –December 1, 2021 meeting

Kari Terwilliger asked the Board if they had reviewed the minutes from the December 1, 2021 meeting and if they had any questions, comments, or corrections to make. There were none. She asked if there was a motion to approve said minutes. **Andrew Dennison made a motion that the minutes from December 1, 2021 be accepted as written. Motion seconded by Steve Lynch. Motion carried.**

4. Address Board Member Terms that Ended on 12-31-21

Kari Terwilliger informed the Board that terms for John O'Connell, III and Thane Benson both ended on December 31, 2021 and that the Board will need to recommend new candidates to the County Legislature to fill the two now vacant farmer representative seats on the Board. Kari asked if any of the Board members had discussed serving on the Board with farmers in the county, they had not yet done so. The Board discussed reaching out to the Mennonite famers in the county to see if any would be interested in joining the Board; and asked Kari to update and circulate the outreach and application package that the Board used approximately 4 years ago when John and Thane were appointed to the entire Board so that they could send it out to farmers in the county via newsletters, email, etc. Kari stated she would indeed circulate the materials as requested. No other action was taken on this item.

***Kari adjusted the agenda order at this time in the meeting to allow Dennis Eckel to participate in agenda item #7- Other Business before he needed to leave the meeting. Kari reminded the Board that per Farm Credit East, Dennis' employer, he is not allowed to participate in discussions or decisions related to farmland protection applications.**

7. Other Business

Kari Terwilliger asked if anyone had anything else they would like to discuss. The Board discussed the large-scale solar project in Conquest and how the NYS Siting Board has approved of the application and set the approval schedule for the project; and expressed their disappointment in the process, particularly that the two nominations from the Town of Conquest have yet to be appointed to the state siting board for the review of this project. The Board noted that state representatives from the area have contacted the Governor's office to express their disappointment as well and to call on the Governor to quickly make the appointments so that the town is represented in the review process. The Board expressed their concern that this situation would happen again for other projects proposed in the county and felt that the state really is not interested in the concerns of local municipalities when siting large energy projects. ***Dennis Eckel left the meeting after this agenda item at 10:14 A.M.**

5. County PDR 2021 Pre-Application Review

Kari Terwilliger briefly reviewed the pre-application process with the Board and the previously agreed upon procedures for supporting new farms for state applications, mentioning the establishment of a larger "pool" of supported applicants starting with this round, that new farms can apply annually, and existing applicants will be contacted annually for any updated information on the farm operation that the county may need. The Board asked Kari to discuss the various scoring categories and their weights that are used for each application particularly with regards to how development pressure, farmland protection suitability and proximity to natural resources were determined. The Board also discussed whether a farm should be given higher priority if they are adjacent or in close proximity to already protected farmland. Kari stated that in the past farms received points for proximity to already protected land but that the Board decided a few years ago to try to establish new clusters of protected farmland away from the main core in order to protect valuable farmland in other areas of the county. She mentioned that while this is no longer used for scoring purposes, she does produce a base map for each farm which does show proximity to other protected farms and state land, as the land trusts are generally interested in that information. The Board discussed how they should rank the twelve pre-applications that were received and processed this year and agreed that all should be moved on to the next phase and would be supported by the Board if and when a land trust selected them. **Jeff Ten Eyck made a motion to rank the twelve PDR Pre-Applications from 1-12 with #1 being the highest priority ranking by the Board in accordance with the score each received from the review process so that the highest scoring pre-application would be ranked #1 and the lowest scoring pre-application would be ranked #12. Motion seconded by Dan Welch. Motion carried.**

6. Request from Genesee Land Trust for Updated Letter of Support for Woodworth Farm's (Sterling) NYS PDR Application

Kari Terwilliger informed the Board that she had received a request from staff at the Genesee Land Trust to revise the letter of support that the Board sent them last year for the Woodworth Farm. She was informed that NYSDAM was dissatisfied with the content of the previous support letter, noting that it does not mention that the farm owner plans to shift to a more cash crop focused operation. Kari stated that this information was omitted from the letter because she was unaware of this decision by the farm owners. Kari stated that she worked with staff from Genesee Land Trust to revise the letter which she sent the Board for their consideration, and asked if the Board would approve sending the revised letter to the land trust. **Andrew Dennison made a motion to approve the content of the revised letter of support for Woodworth Farm, for the Chair to sign said letter, and for Kari to transmit said letter to the Genesee Land Trust. Motion seconded by Steve Lynch. Motion carried.**

8. Adjournment

Kari Terwilliger asked if there was any further discussion or business to come before the Board. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to adjourn. **Andrew Dennison made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Steve Lynch. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 10:38 A.M.**