



**ERIE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

October 15, 2020 | 6:00 PM | Via WebEx

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Board Members in Attendance: Brett Kreher, Bryant Zilke, Dan Henry, Dan Castle, Mark Gaston, Rachel Chrostowski, Scott Bylewski, Diane Held

Staff in Attendance: Sarah Gatti

Guests in Attendance: Jeff Kehoe, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

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**1. Discussion: 303-B Enrollment Criteria**

Sarah Gatti briefed the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) on a concern that had been brought to the attention of NYSDAM. The complaint centered around the belief that the AFPB had denied parcels enrollment into the Agricultural District program based solely on acreage/financial indicators. Bryant Zilke further explained that the Erie County Farm Bureau had likewise been made aware of this situation.

The AFPB noted that while acreage and financial questions are included on the enrollment form, these are not the sole factors in determining whether or parcel is recommended for inclusion. Instead, these criteria paint a fuller picture of each parcel and aid the Board in making an informed decision.

It was also noted that counties have the authority to determine criteria for enrollment and when the enrollment form was revised in 2016, NYSDAM was heavily consulted.

**2. Discussion and Q&A: Jeff Kehoe, NYSDAM**

Jeff Kehoe joined the meeting to answer any questions and provide clarification, as needed. Mr. Kehoe explained that this concern had caught his attention and suggested that asking certain question on the enrollment form could be perceived a barrier to entry. He requested that the AFPB strongly consider revising the form to make it clear that applicants can opt-out of supplying certain financial metrics (i.e., annual gross income, five-year financial projects if a start-up). Rachel Chrostowski suggested that the form contain a disclaimer to this effect.

Mr. Kehoe confirmed that AFPBs and counties are free to determine their own enrollment criteria and his suggestions did not have to be acted upon.

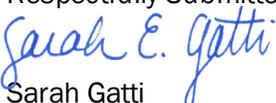
**3. Conclusions**

It was determined that the form will be revised prior to the 2021 open enrollment period.

**4. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Sarah Gatti