ERIE COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
January 26, 2023 | 6:00 PM | Roycroft Power House

Board Members in Attendance: Brett Kreher, Diane Held, Bryant Zilke, Mark Gaston, Rachel Chrostowski, Nancy Snyder

Staff in Attendance: Sarah Gatti

Guests in Attendance: Wendy Salvati

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1. **Consideration of the October 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

   Mark Gaston made a motion for **APPROVAL**, seconded by Bryant Zilke, and carried by all voting members.

2. **Election of Officers**

   Rachel Chrostowski made a motion to **ELECT** Brett Kreher as Chairperson and Bryant as Vice-Chairperson of the Erie County Agricultural and Protection Board (AFPB); seconded by Mark Gaston and carried by all voting members (Brett Kreher and Bryant Zilke abstaining).

3. **North Collins Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Review**

   Sarah Gatti (SG) explained the process involved for the certification of the North Collins Draft Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (AFPP) and stated the AFPB would have to approve, deny, or table the AFPP at the meeting.

   Wendy Salvati of WWS Planning was in attendance to answer questions and address concerns related to the Plan. The Board discussed the draft Plan and had minor concerns. Issues raised included the inclusion of language regarding PILOTs and Community Benefit Agreements, solar development, and stronger language supporting conservation easements.

   Bryant Zilke made a motion to **CONDITIONALLY APPROVE** the *North Collins Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan*, contingent upon amendments as discussed; seconded by Diane Held and carried by all voting members.

   SG will send a copy of the motion to WS once signed by the Chair.

4. Department of Environment and Planning Updates

   A. Board Membership

   SG provided an update on membership noting that the Erie County Legislature Chair will reappoint both Brett Kreher and Dan Henry to the Board.

   B. Agricultural Districts

   SG provided an update on the 303-A and 303-B Agricultural District reports. Both reports have been submitted to NYS for certification. The Erie County Legislature did modify the AFPB's recommendations, opting to retain Samuel Yoder's land (Clarence) and to exclude Fritz Lotter's land (Amherst).

   C. Agricultural Planning Grants

   SG notified the Board that the Towns of Amherst, Colden, and Collins have received grants to prepare and/or update their planning documents.

   D. Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Update

   SG informed the Board that County budget has been dedicated to prepare an update to the Erie County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan (AFPP). The Board will act as the steering committee for the project. The Board will be meeting more often this year than in previous years. SG asked the Board for their input on key issues that need to be addressed in the Plan. The Board suggested the following:

   - Urban and/or small-scale farming
   - Robust mapping
   - Succession planning
   - PDR
   - Diversity in farming

   Rachel Chrostowski (RC) volunteered to serve on the consultant selection committee.

5. Other Business

   SG notified the Board of a State Senate Bill that would allow dual-use agrivoltaics to qualify for an agricultural assessment. The Board had concerns over what qualifies as agrivoltaic and would like to see that definition encompass substantial agricultural operations. SG stated that she would update the Board if the legislation moved forward and seemed likely to be adopted into law. If so, the Board can prepare comments regarding the definition of agrivoltaics.

   RC notified the Board of an upcoming Farmland Protection Implementation Grant round, expected in spring of this year and asked the Board to refer landowners interested in conservation easements to her.

6.   **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2023. A meeting may be scheduled sooner if a consultant has been hired to update the AFPP. SG will coordinate an additional meeting, if necessary.

The meeting concluded at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah E. Gatti
Principal Planner