

Town of Farmington

1000 County Road 8
Farmington, New York 14425

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, April 21, 2022 • 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES—FILED WITH TOWN CLERK

The following minutes are written as a summary of the main points that were made and are the official and permanent record of the actions taken by the Farmington Agricultural Advisory Committee. Remarks delivered during discussions are summarized and are not intended to be verbatim transcriptions.

Committee Members Present: Henry Adams, *Chairperson*
John Marvin
Royal Purdy
Michael Putman
Two Vacant Positions

Committee Members Excused: Denis Lepel
Peter Maslyn
Doug Payne

Town Representatives Present:
Ronald L. Brand, Town of Farmington Director of Development and Planning
Dr. Michael Casale, Farmington Town Board Member

1. MEETING OPENING, PUBLIC NOTICE AND NEWS MEDIA NOTIFICATION

Mr. Adams called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

The Town Clerk was notified of the meeting on April 4, 2022. The meeting clerk notified the Committee members, Town staff and the Canandaigua *Daily Messenger* newspaper on April 4, 2022, with a reminder on April 18, 2022.

The meeting date and time were posted upon the Town website on April 4, 2021, and remained posted.

A public notice of the meeting was published in the Canandaigua *Daily Newspaper* “Bulletin Board” section from April 15, 2022, to April 21, 2022.

2. MEMBERSHIP DISCUSSION

Mr. Marvin: Asked about expanding the scope of the Committee to include residents from the neighboring towns of Victor and Canandaigua to increase the number of members on the Committee. He also asked about the consideration of younger members.

Mr. Brand: Said that the Committee is an advisory group (*Agricultural Advisory Committee*) and that nothing prevents others who have an interest in agriculture and the preservation of farmland from serving in an advisory role. He suggested that Mr. Adams consider submitting an article for the next edition of the Town Newsletter to discuss the work of the Committee which may help to encourage those with an interest in agriculture to consider applying for membership.

3. SOLAR UPDATES

Mr. Brand: Discussed the recent text amendment to the Town Code regarding the revision of zoning regulations for solar energy systems in Farmington. The amendment replaces the Town's solar PV system regulations which were adopted in 2017 based on the Town's review of a large-scale ground-mounted solar PV system on prime agricultural soils. Prior to adoption of the amendment, the Town Board enacted a moratorium on solar projects which expired on February 10, 2022.

Mr. Brand: Said there are a number of communities in New York State that are now looking at the caveats which have been included in the Farmington revised solar code for the protection of the agricultural soils base. Mr. Brand thanked Chairperson Adams for his input during the process of creating these new regulations.

Mr. Brand: Said that one site which had recently been considered for a solar farm installation is now being considered for housing by the new property owners. He said that since the adoption of the new regulations there have not been any solar applications. Mr. Brand said that perhaps this new requirement for farmland protection which is included in the new regulations may be a deterrent to applicants from proposing new solar farms in certain areas of the Town.

Mr. Brand: Said that a Pre-Construction Meeting was held today (April 21, 2022) for the Delaware River Solar project at the southwest corner of Yellow Mills Road and Fox Road. He said that completion of this meeting will enable the applicant to apply for building permits and to begin moving forward on the construction of this project. Mr. Brand said that the Town residents who brought an Article 78 legal proceeding in opposition of the project have had their attorney file a notice of appeal for which the six-month time period ends on May 15, 2022. Mr. Brand said that the appeal time period may be extended by the appellate court. In the meantime, he said that Delaware River Solar has provided the Town with the required decommissioning bonds and Letter of Credit. He said that the company is now proceeding with final analysis of the present conditions of

the soils which is to be established as the base line for restoring the site's soils to these conditions upon the decommissioning of the solar farm.

Mr. Adams: Said that some solar companies may be more interested in developing projects on large-acreage parcels. He said that the agricultural parcels in Farmington are of smaller acreages which also may be a deterrent to applicants about proposing new solar farms here.

Mr. Brand: Discussed a housing project of 218 homes which has been proposed for several parcels of land north of State Route 96 and south of Collett Road [the former Power and DiFelice properties]. He said that one of these parcels was originally considered for a solar farm but that recently two investors have purchased the property and plan to replace the solar farm installation with home sites.

Mr. Brand: Also discussed an all-electric subdivision project which was recently approved in a Monroe County municipality which may serve as a test for other all-electric home sites.

4. UPDATE ON CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Mr. Brand: Discussed the status of a number of Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) grants which have been approved by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets but which have not yet closed. It was noted that the closing of these grants can take up to five years following approval.

5. UPDATE ON 2021 FARMINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Brand: Said that the 2021 Farmington Comprehensive Plan Update has been completed and is now available on the Town website, as follows:

From the Town of Farmington home page, select Meetings/Agendas/Minutes from the pull-down menu on the left-hand side of the page.

At the next menu, select Comprehensive Plan Update 2021.

At the next menu, select 2021 Edition of the Town of Farmington Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Brand: Said that Mr. Adams provided a great deal of insight into the updated sections of the Comprehensive Plan on agriculture and farmland protection. He expressed his appreciation to Mr. Adams for his input on the Town's Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee.

Mr. Brand: Said that one of the identified High Priority Actions in the Plan is to amend portions of Chapter 165 (Zoning) of the Town Code (January 2022–December 2022). He

said that the creation of new zoning regulations to strengthen, support and sustain farming, and to protect natural resources, are among the regulations which should be reviewed. Mr. Brand said that the Town wants avoid applications on the subdivisions of larger parcels of farmland without providing protection for the agricultural uses of the land. The discussion at the meeting included comments on the restrictions imposed by State legislative actions (e.g., Public Policy Infrastructure Act and agricultural district laws) and was focused on the sanitary sewer line which is located in the northwest portion of the Town.

6. AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT ZONING

Mr. Adams: Asked if there are sample or model codes which the Committee could review regarding agricultural conservation district zoning in other municipalities. Mr. Brand suggested that Committee members visit the following website:

Visit: www.generalcode.com/library

On the map of the United States, select the New York State map.

Then select either the Town of Bethlehem (Albany County), the Town of Chili (Monroe County), the Town of Dryden (Tompkins County), or the Town of Ulysses (Tompkins County) to review agricultural conservation district codes in these municipalities.

Mr. Adams: Requested that Committee members review several of the codes from these municipalities to become familiar with these zoning regulations. He said that the discussion of this topic will continue at the Committee's next meeting in June.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, June 16, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. at the Farmington Town Hall, 1000 County Road 8.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Following the meeting, the clerk locked the front doors to the Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

John M. Robortella L.S.

**Farmington Agriculture Advisory Committee Members
As of January 4, 2022**

Royal Purdy

Appointed January 3, 2018
Term expires December 31, 2022

Michael Putman

Appointed March 26, 2019
Term expires December 31, 2023

Vacant position

Term expires December 31, 2024

John Marvin

Reappointed January 5, 2021
Term expires December 31, 2025

Hal Adams (*Chairperson January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022*)

Reappointed January 4, 2022
Term expires December 31, 2026

Vacant Position of Don Jones—resigned in 2022; moved to another state

Term expires December 31, 2026

Denis Lepel

Reappointed January 4, 2022
Term expires December 31, 2026

Peter Maslyn

Reappointed January 4, 2022
Term expires December 31, 2026

Doug Payne

Reappointed January 4, 2022
Term expires December 31, 2026

E-mail Distribution:

Adams, Hal
Gerlock, Meghan (interested citizen)
Lepel, Denis
Marvin, John
Maslyn, Peter
Payne, Doug
Purdy, Royal
Putman, Michael
Bowerman, Nate
Brand, Ron
Casale, Michael
Delpriore, Dan
Gordner, August
Finley, Michelle
Herendeen, Ron
Ingalsbe, Peter
Holtz, Steven
Mitchell, Sarah
Pritchard, Seth (Canandaigua landowner)
Weidenborner, John
Wright, Lorna, Genesee Land Trust