

**Agricultural and Farmland
Protection Board Meeting
February 26, 2018**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Ms. Jardine called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.
 - A. Introductions – Introductions were made.

- II. **ATTENDANCE**
 - A. Members: Elaine Jardine, Tim Lawton, Andy Fagan, John Lacey, Howard Visscher, Ed Hollenbeck, Terie Huseby, Pam Moore
 - B. Staff: Wendy Walsh, Danielle Singer, Barb Neal, Linda Sampson
 - C. Guests: Sarah Titus, Newark Valley Resident
 - D. Not in attendance: Dale Weston, Ben Whittemore, Lisa Bloodnick

- III. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Ms. Jardine stated that she will be taking on Acting Chair at today's meeting due to Mr. Lawton being under the weather and asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Lacey made the motion to approve the agenda; Mr. Visscher seconded the motion. All were in favor.

- IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Ms. Jardine asked for a motion to approve the following minutes:
 - A. February 7th, 2017 - Mr. Visscher made the motion to approve the minutes from February 7, 2017; Legislator Hollenbeck seconded the motion. All were in favor.

- V. **NEW MEMBER APPOINTED, AGRIBUSINESS POSITION**
 - A. Welcome Howard Visscher – Ms. Jardine welcomed Mr. Visscher as a new addition to the Ag & Farmland Protection Board in the Agri-business position to serve a 4 year term.

- VI. **2018 ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT INCLUSIONS**
 - A. Resolution #1-2018 Recommendation to County Legislature – Ms. Jardine reported receiving 2 requests for inclusions for the Town of Nichols; Robert and Pam Moore, 2215 Moore Hill Road, and John Cheely 2084 Moore Hill Road. Data Collection Forms, maps, Environmental Assessment Forms, newspaper ad for enrollment, the press release and the ED&P Facebook page post were all on display at the meeting, as well as the resolution for the Ag & Farmland Protection Board to make a recommendation to the County Legislature to include this viable agricultural land. Ms. Jardine added she has completed the SEQR form stating there are no impacts. This resolution will go before the Legislature at the Legislative Meeting on March 13th.

Ms. Jardine asked for a motion to approve Resolution #1-2018 recommending to the County Legislature the inclusion of these lands. John

Lacey made the motion to approve the resolution; Ms. Huseby seconded the motion. All were in favor.

VII. STAIEP PROJECTS STATUS – Ms. Walsh and Danielle Singer reported the following:

The Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District partnered with New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to deliver a grant program to support agricultural capital projects throughout Tioga County. Funding was made available through the Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement Program (STAIEP) to eligible farmer landowners to complete projects that would increase farm production, advance farm conservation and environmental goals, and enhance profitability.

State funding requests were capped at \$100,000. Applicants were required to have a total project cost of at least \$20,000, as well as, provide a 10% or 25% program match depending on the amount of funds requested. Some of the projects exceeded the \$100,000 cap and the applicants paid the rest of the project costs themselves, making their match larger than 25%. Applicants were also eligible to receive an additional \$10,000 in funding for the project if the farm agrees to participate in an approved environmental stewardship program.

There were 14 farms funded in Round 1, however, only 13 decided to move forward with the funding. Currently 11 of the farms have completed their projects and received payment. The last 2 farms have until April this year to finish up their projects. Each farm had 18 months from the date of signing their contract to complete their project.

There were 3 farms funded in Round 2, two of the farms have decided to move forward with the funding and are in the construction phase.

Tioga County Soil and Water plans to complete economic impact statements (modeled from the Tioga County IDA PILOT Cost/Benefit Analysis) on all the projects and compile them into a report to pass on to Ag & Markets and the Legislature to show what a positive impact this grant has had on our county.

A detailed summary, including before and after pictures, for the Engelbert's Farm Project was on display at this meeting, as well as an infographic that was put together and posted to the ED&P Facebook page. Other project packets were available at the meeting: Bast Family Farm, King Dairy Farm, Lawton's Jersey Farm, AA Dairy LLC.

Mr. Lawton commented that it was a good opportunity to get projects done that they may not have been able to complete on their own, he found Soil and Water very helpful and said it was a good experience.

Ms. Walsh reported the Mead Farm is a participant in this program and is where Sundaes on the Farm is being held in late July. Anyone who attends this event will get to see their completed project first hand.

Ms. Walsh indicated that the goal is to put all this together in a package, testimonials included, and send it to Ag & Markets and to the Governor to express appreciation for the program they rolled out and show how it helped to make improvements to the farms. One suggestion for improvement they will provide is to require reimbursement by phase instead of entirely at the end to provide some cash flow.

VIII. NY GROWN & CERTIFIED – An Agricultural Economic Development Program the Governor started, mainly for produce but also for dairy and meat; anything sold to the public. This program is about the process of branding and stamping a product NY Certified. The farms with eligible products have to go through a food safety audit before the product is certified.

The counties that are part of the NY Grown and Certified Southern Tier Block Grant that Broome CCE is heading are Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Steuben, Schuyler, Tompkins and Tioga.

Ms. Jardine reported the regional committee will be reaching out to farms we think would be interested in this program. There is funding for capital projects that need to get done on the farm in order to produce certified products. Ultimately, this will be assigned to the person being hired for the new part-time Ag EcDev position beginning soon.

Ms. Jardine announced that there will be trainings offered on the program itself and on food safety audits, as well as other required training farmers may need to participate in the program.

The link for the website mentioned for the entire NY Grown and Certified Program is <http://www.certified.ny.gov/>

IX. NUISANCE COMPLAINTS – Ms. Walsh reported a couple of issues related to farming operations in Newark Valley. One is a neighboring complaint regarding the animal husbandry in the winter months. The farm operator and the neighbor are working with the Farm Bureau regarding this issue.

The other complaint is with a pig operation recently opened in Newark Valley off Rt. 38; Mr. VanBlarcom of Farview Farms, LLC. The Town Supervisor and the County Attorney did their due diligence and looked into any requirements the farm has to follow from a permitting and regulatory standpoint and also worked with DEC regarding requirements from a water quality perspective and air emissions. The concern is regarding foul odor from the facility and the spreading applications of manure on the farm. The

town agreed to have a town board meeting inviting the farm owner and the neighbors that had concerns to discuss and find a way to move forward. Members of the Farm Bureau and Ms. Walsh were also in attendance.

The farm owner heard the concerns and is willing to try to address them. Currently he has 2500 sows with a mature weight of 400 pounds and has the ability to hold up to 700 replacement sows that he currently does not have at this time. Has 15 to 18 months' worth of manure storage under the barns that is enclosed.

What makes this issue of manure odor and spreading tricky is the no-till system the farmer is using; this reduces the ability to address the ammonia odor. The farm owner met with Farm Bureau members a second time, to explore some alternatives to address farm improvements and the odor concerns. He is willing to look into spreading equipment or a possible injector system, however this equipment could be costly and may not work with the no-till system. There is also a soil-type concern; you can't have rocky soil. All alternatives are being explored and Ms. Walsh indicated a willingness for SWCD to help in any way. DEC requirements are being met, however by meeting some of the water quality requirements it makes air emissions harder to deal with. Ms Walsh reported this is the first big hog operation in Tioga County, so these problems present new challenges, but will continue to move forward.

Ms. Jardine introduced Sarah Titus, a Newark Valley resident living in the neighborhood and representing the neighbors dealing with this concern. Ms. Titus reported that there is no interest in shutting down the farm, but expressed the necessity of addressing the odor. Ms. Walsh will keep her informed of any progress.

- x. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE GROUP ACTIVITY** – Ms. Jardine introduced Barb Neal to report on the Ag Resource Group (ARG) activity. Ms. Neal commented on the support she is receiving from Soil and Water since taking over this group and reported trying to have a speaker at the monthly ARG meetings. For example, last month Monica Roth, Regional Ag Development Specialist in Tompkins County came to talk about agri-tourism. This month Becca Maffei, Tioga County Tourism, will attend the meeting to talk about an opportunity coming to Tioga County called TBEX, a Travel Bloggers event on September 11th. Ms. Neal mentioned the success of Sundaes on the Farm; 700 people in attendance last year.

Ms. Neal indicated the primary role of ARG is to raise agricultural awareness in the county and mentioned CCE recently hired Missy Bidwell to bring ag education to classrooms throughout the county. Ms. Neal pointed out the importance of public outreach, making the public aware of the role agriculture plays in Tioga County and how valuable that role is.

Implementing the Ag and Farmland Protection Plan will continue to be a priority as well.

Ms. Jardine suggested Ms. Neal be on the distribution list for invitation for the Ag and Farmland Protection Board meetings to stay informed. Ms. Neal was in agreement.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR Ms. Jardine reported that her purpose for calling this Board together is for the NYS Agricultural District Program mandated activities, however, suggested she would be glad to put together other meetings if anyone had anything to discuss.

Ms. Huseby suggested a fall meeting, maybe October at the end of the growing season, might be a good time to have a second Board meeting to work on the Status of Agriculture in Tioga County report.

XII. ADJOURNMENT - With no further discussion, Ms. Jardine asked for a motion to adjourn. Legislator Hollenbeck made the motion to adjourn and Mr. Visscher seconded the motion. All were in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Sampson
Administrative Assistant, Economic Development & Planning