

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD MINUTES

Monday, February 23, 2009

PRESENT: Fred Croscut, Jay Gould, Virginia Carlberg, Brian Aldrich, Alice Growley, Steve Kimball

ABSENT: William Daly, Dennis Rak

OTHERS: Donald McCord (Planning)

MINUTES	There were no minutes requiring approval.
PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR	County Executive Greg Edwards thanked the board for taking the time to convene and discuss the State Agricultural Districts. Executive Edwards said that agriculture is an important part of Chautauqua County and the County was committed to helping the Board catch up on the review of the districts. Mr. Edwards said that Don McCord's schedule had been rearranged to allow him to focus on this important issue.
NEW BUSINESS: Overview of District Review Status	<p>Don McCord explained that there are currently 13 State Agricultural Districts within Chautauqua County. Don said that the County is behind on 12 of the 13 8-year reviews for the districts. He said that if the review of the current district being examined is completed before June, the County would remain at the 12 out of the 13 level.</p> <p>Don explained that the review process is a 300-day process that involves the local farmers, the Legislative Office, Planning Office, State Ag & markets and citizens. With the reviews being so far behind there are some opportunities to streamline portions of the process by running them simultaneously. Don said that he would show the board a several options for consolidating the districts, which may allow for a better review cycle.</p>
Request for Inclusion / Exclusion	<p>Don reported that an ad hoc committee of farmers from the towns had meet on December 4th at the Town of Carroll Offices to examine the current District # 12 and identify potential modifications. This group of farmers included farmers from the Towns of Busti and Kiantone, which had expressed an interest in having farmland within their townships added to the Carroll District.</p> <p>A mailing was sent to all landowners whose property was suggested for inclusion in the modified district and 30-days were given to respond. Don said that George Schuver (Kiantone 404.00-2-15) had asked to not have his parcel added in because of the desire to convert the land to a commercial use. Eric Hewitt (Busti 436.00-2-11) and Ronald Nelson (Busti 438.00-1-1) both asked to have an additional parcel added to their agricultural holdings.</p> <p>Other inquiries regarding the process were received but no opposition was voiced once the process and its purpose were explained.</p> <p>Additionally, the group discussed the agricultural tax exemption process and the effect on inclusion or exclusion to the district. Don McCord informed the group that property owners may get the agricultural exemption without being located within the district. It was decided that the tax-exemption factor would not play a significant role in this process.</p>
Draft County Agricultural District # 12 Report	<p>Don presented the Draft County Agricultural District Report to the Board. The report included land suggested for inclusion and land included for exclusion as well as the existing parcels within the current District. The report examined the current state of farming within the districts boundaries and provided data for acreage, farm types and the number of farms.</p> <p>Steve Kimball made a motion to accept the report as presented with a second by Fred Croscut the Board unanimously accepted the report and recommended it be sent to the Legislature.</p>

<p>Agricultural District Consolidation Plan</p>	<p>Don McCord presented a map of the County Agricultural Districts to the Board. Don explained that the reviews of 12 of the 13 districts in Chautauqua County were overdue. He told the board that staff reductions within both the Planning Department and the Legislative Offices had made it more difficult to stay current with the timing of district reviews and the arrangement of the reviews. Don presented four options to the board which would all result in a reduction in the number of districts. The board discussed how different arrangements scenarios might assist local assessors and farmers.</p> <p>Brian Aldrich made a motion that the following consolidations be forwarded to the Legislature for consideration:</p> <p>1) Consolidate County Agricultural District No.1-Westfield, No.3-Portland and No. 4-Ripley with County Agricultural District No.1 serving as the parent district, and</p> <p>2) Consolidate County Agricultural District No. 2-Sheridan, no. 5- Hanover-Forestville and No. 9-Pomfret-Fredonia with County Agricultural District No. 2 serving as the parent district, and</p> <p>3) Consolidate County Agricultural District No. 11- Poland-Ellicott with the Agricultural land from District No. 10 within the Town of Ellington and a portion of agricultural land from District No.13 within the Town of Gerry with County Agricultural District No. 13 serving as the parent district, and</p> <p>4) Consolidate County Agricultural District No. 10- Arkwright, Cherry Creek, and Villenova with agricultural lands from District No. 13 within the Town of Charlotte with County Agricultural District No. 10 serving as the parent district.</p> <p>Jay Gould seconded the motion and the board passed the motion unanimously.</p>
<p>Other Items</p>	<p><i>Members:</i> Don informed the Board that Steve Baran had resigned from the Board due to his business. The Board discussed several potential names to be suggested to the legislative Office. Steve Kimball suggested that Don relay the information to the Legislature if they had not already found a candidate to fill the vacancy.</p> <p><i>Bylaws:</i> The position of Chairman was discussed due to the vacancy created by Steve Baran's resignation. The Board decided to pursue drafting bylaws to assist with the management of the board in the future. In the interim it was agreed that Steve Kimball would serve as interim Chair.</p>
<p>Next Meeting</p>	<p>No meeting was scheduled.</p>