

Town of Ballston Farmland Protection Plan

Committee Meeting

Minutes

Thursday, January 26, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

Ballston Town Hall

1. **Attendance:** Joan Pott, Chairperson; Frieda Garrison; Richard Voehringer; Jeremy Knight, Town Council liaison; Laura Conrad; Andy VanVorst; Chuck Curtiss; Bob Pustolka (town residents also attending: Steve and Gail Merchant; Melissa Bentley)
2. **Approval of October 2011 Minutes**
3. **Activity Report:**
 - a. Two Christmas trees were entered on behalf of FLPP in the BHBL Women's Club Festival of Trees held at Town Hall in December. Thanks to Polly Windells and Steve Stark and Steve and Gail Merchant for their hard work and artistic talents! A Thank You note was received by the Committee from the Club's Event's Chairwomen to be read and included in the minutes.
 - b. Ag District Exemption from Special District Tax. Town Board signed the Resolution enacting the exemption at its January 2012 meeting. The only Special District which has not yet signed its Resolution is the BHFD; but, it is scheduled to do so at its February 2012 meeting. Tom Shambo reports there may be a couple of dissenters. Bob Pustolka has volunteered to call him and answer any questions. (No one raised any objections during the Public Hearing held at Town Board meeting Jan. 3, 2012.) Tom Shambo is aware we are working under a drop-dead date for the 2013 tax rolls.
 - c. Ongoing identification of conflicts/pressures/challenges facing farms in Ballston.
 1. Mass Gathering Law – discussion as to whether Arts Fest, Equipment/Livestock Auction, an on-farm classroom for education of public would fall under permit requirement. Ag & Mkts asserts these are all functions of ongoing agricultural business.
 2. Definition of Agritourism
 3. Green Energy issues; i.e., external wood furnaces, solar panels, wind turbines; methane Hydrofracking – committee wants to be proactive. (Joan Pott to contact Soil & Water)
 4. Relocation of Farm Service Agency office from CCE in Ballston to Greenwich, Washington County. (Joan Pott to attend meeting.)
4. **Landowner Survey – complete and ready for copying/ mailing.**
5. **FLPP Mission Statement, Goal, Proposed Mission & Formation of Ag Task Force, and Definition of Agri-tourism all final edited, voted, and approved.**
6. **Remaining Tasks:**
 - a. Assemble Ag Soil Types/Ag Inventory-Map/Types of Ag currently in town
 - b. Identify lands that could be reclaimed for agriculture
 - c. Analyze data and identify current agriculture threats, opportunities, fiscal and comprehensive plan/zoning impacts on agriculture
 - d. Mail Survey/compile data when returned and review for C above.
 - e. Evaluate town development trends and pressures (reference current Zoning Ordinance & Comp Plan)
 - f. Current regional planning
 - g. Interim Report to Board in March
 - h. Assemble Draft for Town Board vote.
7. **Next Meeting: Thurs., Feb. 23, 2011, 7:00, Town Hall Community Room**
8. **Adjourn**