

A public hearing was held by the Town Board of the Town of Ballston on Tuesday evening, December 10, 2013 at the Town Hall on Charlton Road

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| PRESENT: | Patricia Southworth | ----- | Supervisor |
| | Timothy Szczepaniak | ----- | Councilman |
| | William Goslin | ----- | Councilman |
| | Kelly Stewart | ----- | Councilwoman |
| | Carol Shemo | ----- | Clerk |
| | Murry Brower | ----- | Counsel |
| ABSENT: | Mary Beth Hynes | ----- | Councilwoman |

Supervisor Southworth opened the public hearing at 7:00 p.m.

The Town Clerk read the legal ad for the public hearing.

The purpose of the public hearing was to receive input regarding the adoption of the 2013 Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. This is a plan to preserve the rural and agricultural heritage of our Town.

Lisa Nagle, of Élan Planning and Design Inc., gave a presentation on the highlights of the plan. The Town of Ballston received a grant for \$25,000 from the NYS Agriculture and Markets to develop an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. In 2011, the Farmland Protection and Preservation Committee was formed to work on this grant. She has worked with the Farmland Protection Committee on this plan since 2012. Ms. Nagle reviewed the benefits to farmland preservation, the planning process for the grant work, visions and goals of the plan, strategies and recommendations of the plan and the next steps for the adoption of the plan.

Supervisor Southworth commended the committee on their hard work. Every detail of the plan was examined by the farmers.

The Town Clerk read the following correspondence concerning the adoption of this plan.

Mr. Simpson urged the Town Board to vote for the acceptance of 2013 Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan and keep us a farm friendly community. He read the descriptive portion of the document which is available for anyone to read at the Burnt Hills Library. He found the plan very comprehensive and factual in its description of our community and the rural nature of much of the remaining tillable lands of the Town. The plan describes programs to allow the respective farming practices to remain and still provide the landowners with a means to recover their investment, providing financial independence and a flourishing agriculture together. Mr. Simpson stated that the prime farmland within the Town must be retained. Many residents moved to the Town to be associated with this type of environment. The Town residents want this document to become part of the Town's heritage and protect our valuable agricultural community for the value it gives all of us. Mr. Simpson thanked the committee for their long and dedicated work.

Mr. Knight, a full time farmer, former President of the Saratoga County Farm Bureau and former Town Board Member, wrote a letter in support of the plan. He cannot stress enough the importance of the passage of the Farmland Protection Plan. NYS PDR program is extremely competitive and having a document and an agriculture committee in place gives the Town of Ballston an advantage over other municipalities that do not have one in place. The Town's agriculture committee worked very hard over a long period of time. Documents of this nature do not come together overnight, especially when most people involved in agriculture work long hours, seven days a week. He feels it is a good plan and would benefit the agricultural community and the Town as a whole. The Town of Ballston is a "Farms First Community". He stated that agriculture is still a key component to the economic vitality of Saratoga County. He believes that encroaching development pressure from suburban sprawl as a result of the Global Foundries project could jeopardize this vital component of Saratoga County economy of 200+ years. A Farmland Protection Plan will guide current and future generations to protect active farmland and farm viability, as well as provide the rural landscapes everyone enjoys. He

urges the Town Board to pass the Farmland Protection Plan and keep the Town of Ballston farming for another 225 years.

Ms. Pott, Chairperson of the Farmland Protection and Preservation Committee, thanked the committee, the Town Board and the community. She said it was an honor and a privilege to get to know the people on the committee and in the Town better. She is hopeful that they have written a document that will preserve our heritage for generations to come.

Councilwoman Stewart asked if the Board will review the plan and make adjustments or changes to the requirements before taking a vote.

Supervisor Southworth noted that the Saratoga County Agriculture Board has not responded yet. The Town Board can vote on Lead Agency this evening. She hopes the Town Board will adopt the plan and legitimize the work of farmers so they can get funding and low interest loans.

At 7:28 p.m. Councilwoman Hynes enters the meeting.

Councilman Goslin asked Ms. Nagle if the Board can suggest changes.

Ms. Nagle replied nothing is mandatory. The Board should adopt the plan as a whole document and implement some recommendations right away and others to be considered later; for example, the hiring of a planner for the Town may not be doable for the Town at this time. The committee is open to comments.

Mr. Gibson, a Town resident, is in full support of the Plan. He gave the example of importance of helping Bob Downey and his farm and how anything that could be done for farms would be great.

Supervisor Southworth stated that the public hearing would be left open until the Town receives a report from the Saratoga County Agriculture Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol R. Shemo
Town Clerk