

NOTES

Town of Amherst Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Advisory Committee Meeting Teleconference February 23, 2021 7:00 pm

Brian Kulpa (BK)
Ellen Parker (ELP)
Carrie Stiver (CS)
Victoria Storrs (VS)
Mike Badding (MB)
Jon O'Rourke (JOR)
Bob Gilmour (BG)

Roberta Rappoccio (RR)
Leanne Voit (LEV)
Wendy Salvati (WWS)
Mark Gaston (MG)
Mike Pope (MP)
Dan Howard (DH)
Dan Spoth (DS)

1. WELCOME BACK/ UPDATE ON PROJECT SCHEDULE

- Targeting completion May 2021
- Next meeting dates
 - Tuesday March 23 – 7pm
 - LEV to send invite
 - Thursday April 8 – 7pm
- Committee members will be asked to do independent reviews

2. REVIEW OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Project Website
 - Survey still posted but is closed.
 - Meeting schedule to be posted (RR)
 - Revised drafts to be posted (RR)
 - Updated schedule to be posted (RR)
- Project Survey
 - Results will be posted and sent to Committee (RR)
- Stakeholder outreach
 - In midst of doing the final interviews. Holding on the final interviews to be reactive to the recommendations.

3. DISCUSSION ON GOALS

- Will be expanded once we have more discussion around these issues
- Please send Roberta comments by 3/5/21
- Goal 1 – How are we defining ag lands?
 - Recognize ag is diversifying and there may be small, hobby sized uses occurring
- Goal 2 – TOA farming is not as robust as other communities, so conservation easements may be the way to go to protect areas on Ag and non-Ag land
- Goal 3 – keep it economically viable
- Goal 4 – agri-tourism. Create markets for farm activities
- Goal 5 – connection between consumer base and farmers
- BIG PICTURE FOR RECOMMENDATIONS is to achieve these goals.
- Make sure the Goals cover the RANGE of concerns/perspectives that the Town has

4. DISCUSSION ON AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FINDINGS

- Report will be sent to Team by VS

- Qualitative and quantitative research was done
- Ag not an econ driver, but it is important for quality of life and the way people live in the community
- Discussion items
 - what are the high-value/high-yield crops that are being distributed outside of the area?
 - What is Ag to the healthcare industry? What is Ag to support another tech? what are the goods/commodities that need to be grown and what are the post-processing activities that need to be provided for?
This will be added to recommendations
 - How do we transform our Ag economy, thinking about future ag crops? What's next?! What does the high-profit market look like?
 - What existing resources are underutilized, like the commercial kitchen at the senior center
 - Agri-tourism and the idea of connecting residents and neighbors with ag community...local farms growing items that are not just benefitting markets but how is it impacting the medical or tech community?
 - BNHV...energy and potential
 - Would love to do an exhibit that focuses on this type of work!
 - Invite farmers to come up to Village (establish more communication and exchange of ideas)
 - Working together can avoid duplicating efforts like classroom space.
 - BNHV potentially looking for a partner in the ag industry – (start forging connections using existing resources)
- Some more detailed goals
 - Commercial Kitchen
 - Entrepreneurship resources
 - What do entrepreneurs need to take an idea and run with it other than just space
 - Physical outdoor and indoor space
 - Seems to be demand for classroom or community space where residents can come together to learn skills?
 - Community garden space for renters and others with limited space
 - Connect to organizations
 - Cornell Cooperative
 - School garden club...can serve food in cafeteria
 - Engage people when they are younger!
 - Currently no ag discussions in local school curriculum

5. LAND USE REGULATIONS

- To make Amherst a more farm-friendly space we community consultants will suggest adjustments to the code
 - Definition changes, expansions
 - Define/support hobby farming
 - Rezoning existing farmlands
 - WWS to expand on all the above in Section 5
 - Map 8 with an overlay of SA zoning

6. OTHER PRELIMINARY FINDINGS/ISSUES/ OPPORTUNITIES

7. ACTION ITEMS – SEE ABOVE HIGHLIGHTS