



# Cattaraugus County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board

## AGRICULTURAL & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD MEETING

County Center, Little Valley, NY

October 6, 2015

### **Board Members**

David L. Zilker  
**Chairman**

Barbara D. George  
**Vice Chairman**

Crystal J. Abers

Lynn Bliven

James L. Boser

Daniel Brown

Charles W. Couture

Brian Davis

James Finch

Daniel T. Martonis

Donald Telaak

**Ag Board Members Present:** Barbara D. George, Vice Chairman  
Crystal Abers  
James Boser  
Charles Couture  
Brian Davis  
Daniel Martonis  
Donald Telaak

**Ag Board Members Absent:** David Zilker, Chairman  
Daniel Brown  
James Finch

**County Planning Board Ag Committee Present:** None

**Planning Staff Present:** Paul R. Bishop, Senior Planner  
Ginger G. Malak, Program Assistant

**Guests:** Richard Zink, Executive Director, Southern Tier West RP&DB

In the absence of the Chairman, Vice Chairman Barbara George called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Donald Telaak moved with a second from Charles Couture to approve the April 14, 2015 minutes as submitted. Motion carried.*



## **AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION PROCESS**

Crystal Abers reported that the Department has a new employee, Kate O'Stricker, who will be working on the consolidation process with Mr. Bishop. The Agricultural District Consolidation is slated to be adopted by the Legislature in December.

## **2016 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FARMER- NEIGHBOR DINNER**

Crystal Abers reported that the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Farmer-Neighbor Dinner will be held on April 13, 2016. The guest speaker will be the Commissioner of Ag and Markets, thanks to Chuck Couture. Food stations have been suggested in the past and that may be a possibility. She asked if anyone had any suggestions for the Dinner.

- Mr. Couture stated that the Commissioner will stay over that night and perhaps breakfast with the Board could be arranged.
- Mrs. Abers stated that dinner menus will be placed on each table.
- Mr. Martonis suggesting putting Place Cards with names for each table.
- Mr. Bishop suggested that a large County map could be placed at the entrance and when the attendees register they each get a sticker to place on the map indicating where they are from.
- Mrs. George stated that the Dinner has been sold out in the past. If the County wants to have more people attend, then the venue will have to change.

Mrs. George asked if anyone had attended the Allegany County Dinner. Mr. Zink reported that Kim LaMendola from Southern Tier West had attended.

A Committee to work on the Dinner will be appointed at the next meeting.

## **FARM TOUR 2015 CRITIQUE**

Mr. Bishop distributed a brochure of the 2015 Farm Tour. He described the tour that included Canticle Farms, Pleasant Valley Greenhouse and Nursery, Eco Valley Farm, and Sprague's Maple Farms. He stated that 15-20 people participated in the tour.

Mrs. Abers reported that a video, including pictures of the tour, was presented to the Legislature. This could be available for the Farmer-Neighbor Dinner.

There was further discussion on the tour and possible farms to include next year.

## **Terms Expiring 12/31/2015: Dan Brown and Chuck Couture**

Mr. Couture said that he would serve another term. Mr. Bishop will call Mr. Brown as to his intentions. Mrs. George asked for recommendations for filling that slot, if he does not wish to serve another term. It was reported that Dan Pawlowski from Pumpkinville expressed an interest and Mark Prince from Canticle Farms would also be interested. Mrs. George emphasized that the most important aspect of being a member is to attend the meetings.

## **STAFF UPDATES**

### **Cattaraugus County Farm Trail Brochure**

Paul Bishop distributed the completed Cattaraugus County Farm Trail brochure. Mrs. Abers reported that Rick Miller wrote several articles for the Olean Times Herald regarding the Trail.

### **“Living in the Country” Brochure - Update**

Paul Bishop stated that this brochure should be updated. There is approximately 200 left of the current brochure. He asked the Board members to review it and provide him with any updates they might have.

### **New Forest Economy**

Crystal Abers reported that on September 17, Senator Cathy Young announced a \$1 million State grant to help establish the Bio-Refinery Commercialization Center at the Wellsville Campus of Alfred State College. Both Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties have contributed \$75,000 as seed money to Seneca Trails RC&D to help launch the New Forest Economy project.

Researchers from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) has initiated this vision of using their science to revitalize rural New York, especially in areas that have an abundance of hardwood forests and farmland suitable for growing willow. Dr. Thomas Amidon, Bio-refinery Research Institute director, and Preston Gilbert, SUNY Presidential Fellow for the New Forest Economy and assistant director for Community Development, have developed a Hot Water Extraction (HWE) process on cellulose material in a laboratory at SUNY ESF.

The process extracts useful chemicals from natural products, including low value timber and willow. The chemicals can be used for various industrial products and the remaining cellulose material can be used for pellets and products used in structures. Fuels such as ethanol, butanol, methanol and algal biodiesels from the fermented sugars generated in the process are produced through the environmentally-friendly, cutting edge technique.

The ESF researchers have teamed up with Alfred State’s School of Applied Technology to establish the Bio-refinery Development and Commercialization Center at the Wellsville campus to further advance research of the HWE process and take the current successful HWE process to a commercial level. The bio-refinery would be an anchor to develop an integrated cluster of businesses and industries that would rely on products that are produced at the bio-refinery, growing jobs and economic opportunities in the Southern Tier.

The Center will be designed to enable private firms to scale the production of bio-renewable materials and sustainable energy from lab-bench to commercial volumes. It will offer public and private entities access to shared infrastructure and services including material handling equipment, large reaction vessels, and the heat and power load to drive down chemical costs and process bottlenecks that can hinder companies’ abilities to bring products to market. The College will gain a unique educational opportunity for students to obtain hands-on learning alongside industry.

Mrs. Abers stated that the project is a great opportunity for new job growth. The New Forest Economy initiative provides a wealth of opportunities for our land owners well into the future. The County has an abundance of natural resources that can be utilized. However, the project is more about forest management, as it will involve using wood waste and not clear cutting. The County is looking forward to providing possible sites for a new manufacturing facility in Cattaraugus County.

Mr. Zink added that Seneca Trail RC&D is also looking for a \$2 million grant from the US Economic Development Administration. It will take 2 to 3 years for the small facility to become operational and up to 5 years for the larger facility.

## **AGENCY UPDATES**

### **Farm Bureau**

Charles Couture reported that in July 2016, the **Farm Bureau Board of Directors** will hold their Annual Meeting in Cattaraugus and Allegany Counties. 25-35 people generally attend the meeting. The agenda will include a two-day tour (one day in Allegany County and one day in Cattaraugus County).

### **Cooperative Extension**

Paul Bishop reported that **Lynn Bliven has resigned** from the Board as she no longer represents Cattaraugus County. He will look into whether that member slot needs to be an Extension Agent. The Board instructed staff to send a letter to Ms. Bliven to wish her well and thank her for her service on the Board.

Crystal Abers reported that Mrs. George's husband is one of the 9 members of the **Cattaraugus County Extension Board**. The organizational meeting was held on August 27. Only 25 people were needed to approve the new Board members. However, over a hundred people attended, including 12 County legislators. The Board officially became effective on October 1, 2015.

Donald Telaak reported that he attended the first meeting and found a diverse membership with open minds and a positive outlook. Diane Clayson is the President of the Board and Diane Held will serve as the Interim Director.

James Boser commented that the #1 goal is 4-H and assisting the farmers is #2. Mrs. Abers described the assistance that the Department provides to farmers through its Revolving Loan Fund.

Mrs. Abers reported that she attended the **NYS Association of Counties** Conference in September and the #1 issue voiced by the counties was they could not afford Cooperative Extension. They all agree as to the importance of the Extension, but each county is at different stages in terms of making changes in their Extension.

A discussion on the County Budget and Casino funds followed.

### **Southern Tier West**

Richard Zink reported on the following:

**Farmers' Market SNAP Support Grants (FMSSG).** The US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service announced the availability of \$3.3 million in competitive grant funds to be awarded through the FMSSG in FY2015. These funds are intended to support "the participation of farmers' markets in SNAP by providing equipment and support grants to new markets and those currently participating in the program."

For the "From the Ground Up: Expand and Sustain SNAP at Farmers Markets" project, Southern Tier West requested \$99,813 in Federal funding, which will provide research and data analysis, technical assistance, educational training, volunteer training, and capacity building strategies to farmers market managers, perform outreach to SNAP clients, and develop curriculum and training materials for the STW Regional Farmers Market Network.

There is a big learning curve for most of the 18 markets that are involved. Southern Tier West would like to assist them with whatever they need and also help the local farmers as much as possible. The two-year grant requested a card reader for each of the markets.

Susan Avery from Southern Tier West will be surveying the consumers to ascertain why they visit the markets, what they buy, and other questions regarding their participation in the markets.

The Board asked Mr. Zink if he would provide a presentation on the survey in two months.

Funding to continue with the **Kitchen Table Consultants** will be available soon. The Consultants have talked to over 17 producers and 15 processors in and outside the region. There will be many opportunities as this project moves forward.

Further discussion followed.

### **OPEN FORUM**

No other comments were made.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 1, 2015 at 1:00 pm. It was agreed that the Farmer-Neighbor Dinner Committee would meet at 12:30 pm, prior to the Board meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Charles Couture moved to adjourn with a second by Jim Boser at 2:30 p.m. Motion carried.