

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – OCTOBER 25, 2022

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT: Griffith, Campbell, Hicks, O'Brien, Shaw, Skellie

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ABSENT: Ferguson

SUPERVISORS: Hall, Henke, Hogan Clary

Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board

Al Nolette, County Treasurer

Dan Martindale, Deputy County Attorney

Melissa Fitch, County Administrator

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Accept Minutes – September 20, 2022
- 3) Septic Program Funding Award
- 4) Solid Waste Management Plan Discussion
- 5) Tourism Updates
- 6) Parcels Requesting Inclusion in Certified Ag Districts
- 7) Other Business
- 8) Adjournment

Chairman Griffith called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. in the second floor classroom, Room B214, Municipal Center, Fort Edward.

A motion to accept the minutes of the September 20, 2022 meeting was moved by Mr. Skellie, seconded by Mr. O'Brien, and adopted.

Laura Chadwick, Real Property Director, addressed the following item:

- **PARCELS REQUESTING INCLUSION IN CERTIFIED AG DISTRICTS:**
  - The Ag and Farmland Protection Board met on September 22, 2022 and discussed three annual inclusions in ag districts and one exclusion for consolidated ag district #8 which is in the 8-year review process. The three inclusions are as follows: Lake Side Farm properties 200+ acres in Putnam, Dempsey property in White Creek adjoining parcels that he wants to combine, and McMore in Whitehall a small parcel .20 acres to include in property that is currently being farmed. One exclusion in CAD#8 in Hebron, Iman a 1.7 acre parcel not used for ag. The Ag and Farmland Protection Board approved all of the inclusions and one exclusion. Motion to approve and move forward with the inclusions and exclusion from ag districts was moved by Mr. Skellie, seconded by Mr. Hicks and adopted.
- **COUNTY-WIDE RIGHT-TO-FARM – Chairman Griffith**
  - The Ag and Farmland Protection Board also requested to have a county-wide ag right-to-farm law and there are some benefits to this. Mr. Skellie, who is a member of the Ag and Farmland Protection Board, stated when going for ag land protection and other things if the County has an ag right-to-farm law it scores more points on purchase of development rights and in grants. Not all towns have ag right-to-farm laws. Need more information before considering at the county level. The Economic Development Director stated they looked at this back in 2017 when they did the county-wide Farmland Protection Plan. She thought 11 out of the 17 towns had right-to-farm laws.

Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director, addressed the following items:

- **SEPTIC PROGRAM FUNDING AWARD:**

- Received a NYS DEC grant in the amount of \$250,000 intended to replace failing septic systems within 200 feet of the shoreline of Lake George and Cossayuna. DEC had specific guidelines for what was and was not eligible. The program has been managed by Soil and Water. NYS DEC offered the county an additional \$490,000 grant for a total available of \$740,000. The basic rules on the septic replacement program are the program will fund a maximum of \$10,000 up to 50% of the cost of replacing the septic system. The bottom line intention of the program is to protect water quality. No income constraints or other constraints. New construction is not an eligible cost. Soil and Water is too understaffed to manage the program so they requested some help and a web page was created on the County Administrators page with the full information to assist applicants; applications, maps of properties eligible and frequently asked questions. A second letter will go out to potentially get more properties to participate. This new grant funding will be recognized in 2023. The contract completes in 2026. This is a reimbursement grant. The County Administrator stated only \$7,500 has been claimed under this program. Suggestion made to have a banner on the County's home web page announcing this program would be beneficial. The Treasurer suggested public outreach like meetings at town halls in the areas that are impacted.
- **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN DISCUSSION:**
  - Link to Solid Waste Management Plan  
[https://www.washingtoncountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21792/WCSWMP\\_DRFTForReview\\_10\\_19\\_2022\\_wAPP](https://www.washingtoncountyny.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21792/WCSWMP_DRFTForReview_10_19_2022_wAPP)  
Based on NYS DEC regulations that require the county-wide adoption of a solid waste management plan, this plan in drafted in house by the Planning Department and the Planner has worked long and hard on this plan, it went to committee and was approved, sent to DEC for approval and they asked for additional changes. The general concept of the plan is that DEC is looking for a county to gather all the metrics on how much waste is collected, disposed of, kind of waste and develop a plan to reduce the waste stream. The County does not own any facilities that collect waste. DEC would like more data. DEC did share some data with us and we collected some more data from the contracted service organizations and she thinks DEC now is convinced that we have done what we can. There is an alternative assessment section that involves things that can be done to reduce waste and we can for example put something on the website that encourages recycling or point people to where there might be resources to get information or go recycle things and that was added to the plan. An implementation section was added. If committee approves of draft changes to the plan then they will send it back to DEC and if they approve it goes out for a 45-day public comment period. If it goes through the public comment period it comes back to the county for adoption, then reevaluate in two years and completely rewrite the plan again in ten years. Motion to approve changes was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded by Mr. O'Brien and adopted.
- **TOURISM UPDATES:**
  - Short Term Rental Event will be held November 17<sup>th</sup> from 6PM to 8PM at Salem Artworks to help connect people who are offering short term rentals for overnight stays with products and services and things to do in the county. They are putting together a small tourism binder which will allow the short term rental owner to insert pages that lets visitors know for example where there are some art galleries, where to get your car or a flat tire fixed and events that might be happening basically resources available in area. The main featured speaker at the event is Chairman Griffith.

- Short Term Rental – In 2020 the average number of rentals on a daily basis was 101, in 2021 163 and right now in 2022 194. There has been a slight shift of the number of units offered on Airbnb versus Vrbo. It looks like it went from a 60% to 70% Airbnb to 20%/30% Vrbo. The number of Vrbo listings is reducing and Airbnb increasing and that is good for the county because we collect tax on Airbnb. Airbnb works better with communities and hosts versus Vrbo. Overall between all of the platforms about \$7M in short term rentals. Fort Ann, Granville and Salem top three in revenue generating. The average overall county wide rate is about \$300 per night and per night in Fort Ann about \$730, Putnam \$500 and Dresden \$430. The rental per night with the three high out, Fort Ann, Putnam, Dresden the rate is about \$240 a night. The better we can showcase why the county is an attractive place to be, the better our economy is going to be.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mrs. Clary passed along a compliment from Sarah Parker on how lucky the County is to have Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. O'Brien and adopted. The meeting adjourned at 1:49 P.M.

*Debra Prehoda, Clerk  
Washington County Board of Supervisors*