

# SENECA COUNTY AGRICULTURE ENHANCEMENT BOARD

## MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 9, 2008

- **Call to Order:** Meeting called to order by AEB President Doug Freier at 19:10.
- **Members Present:** Doug Freier, Dave Kaiser, Julie Thompson, Harriet Haynes, Chris Tarr, Shawn Bossard, Patsy Amidon, Greg Wadhams, Keith Tidball, Mike Dennis.  
Others: Eric Riegal
- **Previous Meeting Minutes** – Discussion & Approval: Keith noted in the March minutes that there was a second on a motion by Patsy but no mention of who made the motion. Keith will put his name in. Keith motion to approve March minutes, Patsy second, all in favor.
- **Ex Officio Reports**
  - County Planning rep: Harriet, south townships working on farmland protection proposals; NYS redoing open space plan, region 8 will work on this update and will meet over next couple of months. Susan Sinclair is rep to Seneca County; contact Harriet for questions or involvement in this.
  - Real Properties rep: not present
  - Farm Bureau rep: Julie T. reported business as usual for the most part. DEC expanding inspections on all water bodies in state not just limited to navigable waters. FB is lobbying against this proposed legislation. The membership has met its member goal and then some, approx 400 members to date. If FB makes 450 will get three state delegates. April 14<sup>th</sup> is the rural urban dinner.
  - Environmental/Farmland Protection rep: Keith, there is a new interpretation of Clean Water Act coming over the next 6 months, (what Julie eluded to in the FB report). There will be hearings on the new interpretations of Act, i.e. class 3 & 4 water bodies. Keith will keep board abreast of any information on this topic. The Finger Lakes Land Trust is looking for suggestions from public on things that should be preserved. This is the season to visit the local SWCD and NRCS office and see what conservation opportunities may exist for your farm. There is small grant program available for completing a CNMP on a farm if the farmer has used USDA funds in the past. A CNMP is one step in the Lake Friendly Farmer program and others.
  - Board of Supervisors rep: Patsy, Indians purchasing more land and now more land has been purchased in Seneca than in Cayuga County. A general discussion by the board on this topic followed. July 14<sup>th</sup> the towns Covert, Lodi, Ovid, Romulus, will dedicate the first NY agriculture college which is now part of Willard and was closed during the Civil War. Dave explained how Cornell came to be once Ovid site closed during the war. Dave gave an ethanol plant update. Waterloo passed resolution to encourage EIS on the site, discussion on this topic followed.

- Agri-buisness rep: Chris Tarr, an appraisal course was taken in May on conservation easements. This may be a requirement for different agencies doing appraisals. IRS has trouble with agriculture appraisals because most of time these lands are more suitable to housing tracts, i.e. the best use (in their opinion).
- Farmer rep: Discussion from farmers on the board. Not a lot of changes since last month; s-beans dropped 2-3 bucks, wheat has dropped, corn is hanging near the same. Dave K, soybean processor looking into the depot and will be going to IBA. Seneca bio-energy will be making oil, and then bio diesel, plans for 35 million gallons per year.

- **Old Business**

- Town of Seneca Falls Water Line Project: Shawn has the final NOI and three letters one each to the AEB, Peter Same, and the land owners affected by the project. The AEB can make comments until 4/24 and send to NYS Ag and Markets. They (project leaders) did not make a concentrated effort to contact landowners. In any case the proposal is on the table. Discussion followed and Harriet noted the Seneca Falls wants to get water to everyone in the town. Keith inquired as to when the letters went out while they were passed around for viewing. Keith commented that the farmers did not feel like they had enough time to voice concerns. Keith questioned how the AEB addresses the fact that some farmers are in favor of the project and that some are not even though it sounds like the proposal is a done deal. Harriet commented that the AEB needs to take advantage of the opportunity and make comment on the document. Form a sub-committee to do this possibly. Keith had two comments: 1 - agriculutre preservation, i.e. how can we (AEB) support the water line project in this context; 2 – a kin to Farm Bureau and supporting farmers wishes, ie improvement of the farmers land value for future sale; discussion followed. Dave suggested a letter explaining our stance and concerns would be in order, Shawn would write the letter with the assistance of Harriet. This was put in the form of a motion. Doug will sign the letter even though two agency folks would draft it. Patsy second the motion; Keith has experience with these letters and will assist if needed; all in favor.

- **Other Old Business:** none

- **New Business**

- PDR Application Progress: Shawn, four applications received prior to the deadline for the program, one each from four different towns, Tyre, Seneca Falls, Fayette, and Lodi. Shawn advised that the AEB should look at these applications sooner than later. The PDR grant program, if it becomes available, will be in June. The checklist developed in Cayuga to weight the applications will be used to do the weighting of applications. Shawn showed the soil maps on the overhead that are ranked high by NY and Seneca County. Shawn suggested a sub-committee review the applications. Harriet, AEB needs to decide if Seneca County will act on behalf for the applicant and who will prepare the application. Keith, AEB send a letter to Board of Supervisors as a heads up on applications coming in and that we are looking for staffing to write the applications, in

the form of a motion by Keith, second by Dave, all in favor. Who will be on the committee? Shawn, Keith, Chris, Dave, and Greg agreed to form a committee. This committee will review all applicants and three will be filed on behalf of county and one on behalf of Fayette board. The date for the committee to meet will be 4/28/8 at 18:00. Shawn will send the e-file of the ranking sheet. The AEB needs to recommend one applicant that will make a good application. Keith made motion that a similar letter be sent to the Town of Fayette, that is being sent to the Board of Supervisors, and their interest as a town to submit a PDR application, second by Julie, all in favor.

- **Other New Business:** none
- **Adjournment** Motion to adjourn by Patsy, second Keith, all in favor.