

## MINUTES

### GENESEE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

Thursday, June 15, 2023

A meeting of the Genesee County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board was held on Thursday, June 15, 2023 at 11:00 AM in the IT Training Room of Genesee County Building 2 at 3837 W. Main Street Rd. in the Town of Batavia.

Members in attendance: Christian Yunker, Jan Beglinger, Dennis Phelps, Donn Branton, Janette Veazey-Post, LuAnn McKenzie, and Felipe Oltramari. Staff present was Erin Pence. Attending via Zoom Cloud Meetings was Amanda Grisa from the Genesee Land Trust.

**The meeting was called to order at 11:15 AM.**

#### **Approval of Minutes**

A Motion to APPROVE the minutes of the March 14, 2023 meeting was made by Steve Boldt, seconded by Donn Branton, and carried.

#### **Farmland Protection Projects**

Amanda presented on the farmland protection project for Udderly Better Acres. Maps of the project footprint were displayed on the screen in the room. A motion to support a recommendation for the project for submittal to New York State was made by Donn Branton, seconded by Christian Yunker, and passed.

Donn Branton left the meeting room for the duration of the next presentation and vote.

Amanda presented on the farmland protection project for Branton Farms. Maps of the project footprint were displayed on the screen in the room. A motion to support a recommendation for the project for submittal to New York State was made by Felipe Oltramari, seconded by Steve Boldt, and passed.

Felipe asked about the allocation of money from New York State for these projects. Amanda answered that there are a number of organizations that submit protection projects for the Finger Lakes region and that there is not enough funding for all of the valid projects, so un-awarded projects will go onto a waiting list.

Christian asked about the changes to conservation districts within the projects that Amanda had mentioned. Amanda answered that a draft of changes had come out

from NYS, and the trust organizations had pushed back against them, so the changes were not implemented this round.

Dennis asked about the NYS regions for farmland protection for the allocation of money, and it was confirmed that the regions line up with the State economic development regions. It was mentioned that there is a push to ask for an additional round of funding for the Finger Lakes region, as there is an abundance of interest in farmland protection, and this additional funding was once done for the Hudson Valley in a similar situation with most of the submitted projects ending up on a wait list.

A motion to support a letter sent to the state supporting an additional round of funding for the Finger Lakes Region was made by Christian Yunker, seconded by Felipe Oltramari, and passed.

A motion that the letters of support sent by the Board for agricultural protection projects do not expire and can be sent again in subsequent years for additional rounds of funding was made by Felipe Oltramari, seconded by LuAnn McKenzie, and passed.

### **Farmland Protection Workshop**

It was discussed that the Farmland Protection Workshop was well attended and generally agreed to be a success, towards the goal of educating farmers about the protection programs and the process involved in applying to the receive funds. Felipe suggested that the County hold a workshop every year, as it is a requirement of the Genesee Valley Land Trust that a landowner go through the workshop before applying.

### **Other Business**

Felipe mentioned the plans to create an agreement with the Genesee Land Trust like is already in place with the WNY Land Conservancy and the Genesee Valley Conservancy, but that the County will commit the same amount of money for next year, requiring 2 applications from each of the three organization instead of 3 applications each. If there is an increase in state funding or local interest, the money provided by the County could be increased in future years.

There was a discussion to schedule quarterly meetings for the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board instead of ad hoc meetings. Meetings will generally be scheduled in March, June, September, and December.

**A motion to adjourn was made my LuAnn McKenzie, seconded by Steve Boldt. Meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.**