

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **GENESEE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD**

**Thursday, March 21, 2024**

A meeting of the Genesee County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board was held on Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 9:30 AM in the IT Training Room of Genesee County Building 2 at 3837 W. Main Street Rd. in Batavia.

Members in attendance: Christian Yunker, Jan Beglinger, Janette Veazey-Post, Anthony Colangelo, Dennis Phelps, and Felipe Oltramari. Attending via Zoom Cloud Meetings was Matt Halladay from the Genesee Valley Conservancy (GVC). Also in attendance were Jared Elliott and Joan Hodges of the Genesee County Soil and Water Conservation District office.

**The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM.**

#### **1. Approval of Minutes**

**A Motion for approval of the minutes of the September 21, 2023 meeting was made by Mr. Yunker, seconded by Ms. Beglinger, and carried.**

#### **2. Genesee Valley Conservancy Farmland Workshop Discussion**

Mr. Halladay said there is a lot of interest for farmland protection implementation funding from Genesee County farmers but the funding is very limited. He would like to table doing another workshop in the County until 2025 in order to manage expectations. We have three solid applications that are likely to be awarded sometime next year. In the meantime, he would like to create a committee to score applications for the next round of funding. The attendees from the last workshop can submit their applications to this committee. The committee would analyze and score them using a set of criteria and this would create a ranked list of applications. He would like to start this process this spring/summer. There was a consensus from the Board on this approach. Mr. Halladay said the process would usually begin with the workshop, immediately after which the application would be rolled out, the applications would be collected and then the committee would score them. The process needs to be established now that the pilot year period has made evident that there is a strong interest in the program. There was a consensus on creating a subcommittee of the AFPB. Mr. Yunker, Ms. Veazey-Post, Mr. Elliott, and Mr. Oltramari volunteered for the subcommittee. Mr. Colangelo asked about the scorecard that will be used. Mr. Halladay said there would be qualitative and quantitative information – tell us about your farm, your capital improvements, do you

have a succession plan, what are your yields, quality of the soils, development pressure including distance to transmission lines, amount of frontage, number of subdivisions in the town or within a certain distance, etc. It is very helpful that the County already has a map of prioritized parcels from the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. Mr. Halladay said he expects the subcommittee would make a recommendation on the prioritized list of applications to the full Board for approval. Then that list would go to the GVC board for approval. Mr. Yunker asked how the queue portion of the process works, does it reset every year? Mr. Halladay said he envisions the subcommittee getting together this spring/summer to create the scorecard, sending the application out to landowners who attended last year's workshop with the new scoring criteria, gathering and scoring those, and creating a ranked list of applications in advance of next year's grant. GVC would then work off that list in order as funding allows. After the funding opportunity closes, those not funded would have to reapply for the next round in two years. Mr. Halladay also said that funding opportunities could grow in the future with the integration of Federal funding. Mr. Oltramari will send out an email that includes all those interested in being part of the subcommittee so we can come up with a date to meet in the future.

### **3. Agricultural District Annual Enrollment Request**

Mr. Oltramari presented the application for enrollment:

#### Requests for Inclusion into Agricultural District No. 1

Application Received: Originally 12/18/2023, accepted 1/26/2024 to comply with time frame

Tax Map Parcel #: 18.-1-73

Town: Batavia

Acres: 26.4

Owner(s): James Fiegl

Current Land Use: Livestock (Chickens), Hay, ECT

Approx. Prime Farmland Soils Composition: 4%

Contiguous to Main Farm Operation? Yes, entire operation within parcel

Ms. Beglinger asked if this was a new property owner. Mr. Oltramari said real property information indicates a sale date for the parcel in 2021.

**A motion was made by Mr. Yunker to recommend that parcel 18.-1-73 in the Town of Batavia be added to Agricultural District No. 1. Seconded by Ms. Beglinger and carried 7-0.**

#### **4. South Lake Street Water Main Replacement, Pavilion – Notice of Intent (NOI)**

Mr. Oltramari presented the NOI for a Monroe County Water Authority (MCWA) project that will replace a water main on NYS Rt. 19 in the Town of Pavilion. One field would be impacted by the project. Draft language was discussed for the letter of response.

**A motion was made by Mr. Branton to send a response letter that includes language regarding the restoration of severed drainage improvements and access ways, hydrants and valve boxes shall not be placed directly in agricultural fields and that the project engineers work closely with both the County Soil and Water Conservation District staff and landowners in order to identify and restore the existing drainage improvements affected by this project. Also any flags or temporary markers for underground utilities be removed from the properties after the project is completed. Seconded by Mr. Colangelo and carried 7-0.**

#### **5. Buffalo Road Tank Water Main Connection, Bergen – NOI**

Mr. Oltramari presented the NOI for a Monroe County Water Authority (MCWA) project that will create a connection between NYS Rt. 19 and the water storage tank off NYS Rt. 33 in the Town of Bergen. This project is mostly taking place via easement across private property only affecting parcel 13.-1-19.11. Draft language was discussed for the letter of response.

**A motion was made by Mr. Branton to send a response letter that includes language regarding the restoration of severed drainage improvements and access ways, hydrants and valve boxes shall not be placed directly in agricultural fields and that the project engineers work closely with both the County Soil and Water Conservation District staff and landowners in order to identify and restore the existing drainage improvements affected by this project. Also any flags or temporary markers for underground utilities be removed from the properties after the project is completed. Seconded by Mr. Colangelo and carried 7-0.**

#### **6. Other Business**

##### **a. Solar Listening Session**

There was a discussion of a meeting hosted by GVC for farmers that have been approached by solar developers. Mr. Branton said it was mainly for projects that did not meet the State siting thresholds. It was attended by approx. 20 people.

##### **b. Build Breen Now**

Mr. Oltramari shared an email sent to the County Manager inviting stakeholders to advocate for hemp production for material uses. The committee agreed that much work still needs to be done to support this

potential industry, including creating a market, de-scheduling the product at the Federal level, and creating the processing infrastructure/support system. Research also needs to be done to address the disease vulnerabilities of the crop.

**c. Planning Dept. staff changes**

Mr. Oltramari announced that the departure of Erin Pence and the hiring of Jimmy Dealaman as Senior Planner in a restructuring of the Department positions. Mr. Dealaman is set to start on April 8.

**7. Next meeting**

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for June 18, 2024 at 11:00 AM.

**8. Adjournment**

**A motion to adjourn was made Mr. Yunker, seconded by Ms. Beglinger. Meeting adjourned at 10:21 AM.**