

Summary of 11-19-2009 Agriculture Focus Group

Steven Boothryd, Camphill Village; Larry Conklin, Tim Raines, Camphill Village; Ken Maine, Shag Bark Farm; William Kiernan, Dairy Farmer; Harry Dodson, Riverstreet; George Beneke, Veterinarian; Ellen Jouret-Epstein, Columbia Land Conservancy

William Kiernan. Dairy Farmer

120 cows, markets milk in high population areas. Farms 600 acres, 4 full-time employees. sells extra crops. Participates in new co-op (Hudson Valley Fresh) in Poughkeepsie.

Concerns for the Future

Has concerns about zoning, particularly the Scenic Overlay which is unduly restrictive in building height and square footage. Town and state laws and definitions do not agree on agriculture.

Steven Boothryd, Camphill Village

240 people in the village on 600 acres, mostly woodland. Small dairy, beef herds, vegetables, grow seed for sale nationally. Except for seeds, output is for Camphill.

Concerns for the Future

None were expressed.

Ken Main, Dairy farmer

Started in 1975. 1500 milk cows, milks 1000 cows. 3-4 employees. All income goes back into this community. Things are very tough now.

Concerns for the Future

Doesn't think town supports farming. Town does not respect Ag & Markets Law. Ag & Markets law and Right to farm are farmers only protection. Copake's definition of farming differs from that of the State. Resents 25000 sq.ft limitation in Scenic Overlay and its height limitation on silos Resents limitation of number of trailers allowed for farm workers. He replaced a mobile home used by his employees and created problems with Planning Board. \$7000 for legal fees.

Larry Conklin, Shag Bark Farms

This is their tenth year; started in 1999 with 400 acres. Have 1000 acres now 5 separate farms. Active nursery stock on 800 acres. Over one million trees. Nursery stock goes to Westchester, Boston, Maine and New Jersey. Presently looking for another 1000 acres. Now sells 40%. 17 employees here; 75 in Westchester. Hopes to open a re-wholesale yard in Copake in next few years.

Concerns for the Future

Will zoning permit the expansion they desire if the expansion is in a "non-agricultural: area? Anticipate 10 people will be employed at the re-wholesale yard. Criticized for putting up deer fencing by neighbors. DEC says no harm done to migratory animals. Let's bring in wild-life expert.

Eric Ooms, Dairy farmer

400 cows in Chatham on 1400 acres. VP of NY Glenwood Center. Town understand farmers better now. Grows silage and dry corn.

Concerns for the Future

onerous. Need flexibility in the definitions for use and size of buildings. Retailing of agricultural products must be considered agriculture, not commercial.

Alice Belt

Owens 72 acres in view of Town Hall. She also owns Kiernan's land. Runs a Greenhouse, but only for charitable purposes. Neighbors use some space for gardens. She is faced with selling the property. Taxes are part of the story.

Concerns for the Future

Ms. Becker

13 horse farm. Riding Instructor, Degreed. Clients are NYC people. They ride and own horses. Presently in class in Florida.

Harry Dodson, Riverstreet Consultant on Farming Issues

Will state conserved land be passed to the next generation? More potential for farming in south Copake than north. Thinks Copake is an opportunity for farm growth. Should seek \$25K grant for farmland protection plan. Town should encourage purchase of development rights. Should better understand the trade-off of areas for conservation and areas for development. Ten year old state protection plan should be updated. 3-4 million people within 100 miles of Copake. Consider using the preferential tax program

Ellen Jouret-Epstein, Columbia Land Conservancy

Impressed with Copake Town Code. Copake permits more than one residential building on one lot, the only town that does so. Discussed a number of approaches for farmland protection at both county and town levels. Should involve the Land Conservancy in review of these types of proposals.