

Copake Economic Advisory Board  
Minutes of Meeting  
January 20, 2009

**Present**

Morry Ordovery  
Chris Quinby  
Marcia Peteroy  
Leslie Wood  
Linda Gabaccia  
Milbrey Zelley  
Bob Sacks  
Karen Hallenbeck  
Danny Thompkins

**Excused**

Fiona Hutchinson  
Neal Klein

**Absent**

**Public**

The list is attached at the end.

**Hops – Tim Reilly**

Tim Reilly came to present his ideas about Copake growing Hops. Hops is a perennial plant which is in abundance. It is in great demand and sells by the pound. For the last 2 years there has become a great shortage. Brewers are used to paying \$4.25/lb, and now are paying \$25/lb. There has been a world-wide shortage. Hops is generally grown in the north-west. It went there from here. NYS was the hop growing capital in the world. In the past 15 years, the growers in the NW were locked into contracts from the large brewers for very low prices. These prices have forced many of them out of the business. It has gone from 500 producers several years ago to about 50 now. There are growers in England. There is a great tradition there, although now, much of that land has been turned over to other crops. There have been climate changes. In NYS there was a fungus, downy mildew that would devastate 5-100% of the crop. There are old hop kilns that dot the land in the NE.

Hops is a crop that has been cultivated for 150 years. It helps to keep bacteria from growing in beer and destroying it. It is also used in cheese for this reason. There are no hops growing here now. All of the problems that pushed the crop to the NW now exist there. There are 57 types of hops grown for beer, but only a few are grown in the NW. Therefore the field has leveled for NYS. There is a crisis. Crisis equals opportunity. This region in particular could get itself into the hop growing game. We have stagnant growth. We have the opportunity to create a COOP that is based in the city of Copake that will offer the opportunity to grow hops, cultivate them, under our guidance, support and tutelage and bring those vines here, picked, kiln dried and stored. Hops grows on 25 foot high vines. A truck drives through and cuts the vines. The vines are picked. The hop flowers are picked, the rest discarded. The flowers are delicious and redolent. Copake hops grew a delicious hops. Tim grew them the last 2 years. In May last year, Tim brought the idea to Reggie Crowley who brought in Walter Kiernan. After some discussion, they bought hops rhizomes for \$1,000. Walter planted it in his soil, and also in Tim's field. What they got from Walter's crop, where the hops were treated very well, was a 25% yield. On the other hand, Tim periodically didn't water them, they were

run over by his mower and yet he had a very large yield. Clearly they want to grow here and want to be left alone.

Brewers are also concerned about hops. Their desire was to have their own hops growing coop. If the brewers got into the business of growing hops, then it would take it away from the farmers. Tim believes this would bring in an industry of brewing that would give us a recognizable product where we would be celebrated for this. There are things that bring themselves to hop growers. Celebrations, craft breweries and craft brewers. The owner of Sam Adams brewery is the largest craft brewer in the US. He buys his hops from Germany. The other people who were growing beer couldn't get their product. Not just because of price, it wasn't available. He offered these people across the board at cost the hops he had in storage. He actually gave the list of customers to Tim.

This is where Copake gets tied in. Tim hopes that if we got organized on this, we could create a COOP. He sent out letters to Kirsten Gillibrand. She sent out her delegate and put it on her short list of priorities. He has said he would sign off on grants. Tim needs support. He wants to turn some of the crops in Copake into hops. We could diversify the crops. They can get the rhizomes from the best rhizome people. Tim could teach them how to grow this and how to be hops farmers. Tim would offer to be project manager. Tim broke out the list of people he would need for this. His report details the people he would need. The state would be attracted to this because it would be an educational opportunity. The old Roe Jan School buildings could store, dry, and process the hops. Job number 2, for Walter Kiernan, would be maintenance coordinator, shipping coordinator, and resident crop engineer. Tim is a graduate of CIA, in their brewery division. He is an avid brewer who brews at home.

They will also need people to grow hops, build trellises and engineer. Hops grows from hemp line, requires people that will train the hops to grow on the hemp line. The trellises are built once and then grow every year on them.

#### Questions:

Karen asked: What about deer? Deer love it.

Morry asked: Has this been offered to anyone else? No. Why only offer this to Copake? Yes, he would include other towns, particularly Berkshires and along 22. If this grows, will it depress the price? He believes that the market might be brought up to the past volume. He suggests that we offer many different types of hops. There is a constant supply of new brewers.

Walter: Frozen storage possible, it can be held back and can be stored for 2-5 years, as long as there isn't oxidation.

Raising money – are the farmers going to be required to buy in? Conversation here will set this up. Walter and Tim put in sweat time. The State has a crop block program for areas that want to diversify into specialty products. Town in effect would become the land owner. Coop would pay for pickers, dryers, etc.. but profit would be for the community.

Todd Earling from Livingston, a member of the audience, works for economic development for Columbia County. He shared: There is a gentleman in Hyde Park who has been doing this for 15 years. Central NY hasn't got to this yet. This will grow organically.

Harvey Weber: we have 125 acres in the center of the town. How could this land be used to grow hops? This would bring people to Copake who would be visitors. This could be an engine for growth in the center of town.

Mibs Zelley: Why would the town have to be involved? Why do you need a political entity to be involved. Tim: Small towns have governments so that people can identify that they belong here. The town is in need of money.

Audience member: Are there other towns this is modeled after? Tim: No.

Audience member: Do they need acreage? Where will you get it from. Walter answered that they don't need a large amount of acreage. People with 2-3 acres could grow hops. An acre, at present value could yield \$28,000-\$36,000. So a person with only a few acres could provide a living. Not meant to be a commodity. Even ¼ acre. The largest grower in NY currently has 8 acres. So it is ideal for very small farms.

The idea is not for each farm to be independent – and they are now deeply independent. They are working with Cornell. If we create a central organization it would work to bring this to local farmers. Hops has upwards of 50 types/varieties. Most of which can't be found. Craft brewers would be totally enthusiastic for this. Even only a small amount of each, for instance Fuggles. We need storage buildings. There is a firehouse, should it be sold. There are so many underused structures here.

Jobs created: Labor jobs. People to till, plant, trellises, cables, hook on hemp rope, maintenance, harvest.

Orders for rhizomes must be put in in 30 days. Plant in March, harvest at varying times. There is a 90 day harvest window across varieties. Processing generates many jobs. Pickers, trucks, storage facilities, kilns, bailing. It grows organically. The most successful form is organic. Todd Earling purchases and plants based on Chatham brewers needs.

Self dry them, grow them, plant them. The rhizomes can also be split and sold after one year, often providing enough money to cover the initial investment.

Bob Saks: Do you have a business plan? A business plan - 5 year plan is critical if you want to raise money. That is what an investor would want.

Hudson Valley Fresh – started by Walter Kiernan is an association that gets quality milk from 15 growers. Best quality milk in country. 36 hours cow to shelf. Farmer owned association.

Next Steps: Provide a list of farmers - Owners of farm land.

Committee: Karen Hallenbeck, Chris Quinby, Morry Ordovery, Walt Kiernan

**Charles Dodson – CEAB representative**

Charles Dodson has provided a list of the activities he currently oversees. With his departure from the CEAB, he is willing to continue to pursue two of these and requests that we select the two he should proceed on. A discussion followed and the board agreed to suggest that he work on the Tri-Town Grants office and the LDC. Milbrey Zellely agreed to share this information with Charles.

The web site was discussed and all agreed a very important medium, all are hopeful Charles will remain doing this and/or find a suitable replacement.

**CEAB Chair**

With Charles Dodson's resignation, the board needs a new chair. Milbrey Zellely made a motion to elect Leslie Wood as the chair. Morry Ordovery seconded motion, vote taken, passed unanimously.

Karen Hallenbeck volunteered to be secretary, Chris Quinby seconded, vote taken, passed unanimously.

Bob Saks, Morry Ordovery, Leslie Wood and Milbrey Zellely agreed to work on the LDC with Charles Dodson, and Chris Quinby agreed to work on the comprehensive planning committee and to assist Neal Klein on the Taconic Hills Internship program.

Ken Flood, the Commissioner of Planning, is to speak at March 17' 2009 CEAB meeting. Notice will be posted in Paper.

One remaining position is open on the CEAB, notice to be posted.

Applications for consideration requesting monies from the Celebration funds were not received this month.

Motion to adjourn by Karen Hallenbeck seconded by Chris Quinby.

Next meeting to be February 17, 2009

Respectively submitted,  
Karen Hallenbeck

List of attendees:

Jamie Larson (Register Star)

Bob Sacks

Timothy Reilly

Frank E. Peteroy

Dan Tompkins

Cindy Hilsolin

George Filipovits

Barbara Filipovits

Diana & Bill Jamieson

Harvey J. Webber

Karen DiPeri

Todd Earling