

## **Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board**

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### **Board Members**

*John McDowell, Chair*  
*Kristin Ossman*  
*John Wickes*  
*Machado Mead*  
*Jim Dean*  
*Joy Macy*  
*Will Summers*  
*Chuck Stead*  
*Harriet Cornell*  
*Sean Mathews*  
*Doug Schuetz*

### **Board Staff**

*R. Allan Beers, Coordinator*  
*Nicole Laible, Environmental Programs Manager*

## **Meeting Minutes** **February 20, 2020**

**Draft**

### Attendance

**Board Members:** Mac Mead, Sean Mathews, John McDowell, Doug Schuetz, Will Summers, Joy Macy, Harriet Cornell (arrived at 10:15)

**Staff:** Allan Beers, Nicole Laible, Linda Grant (Legal)

**Public:** Brianna Rosamilia (RC SWCD)

Meeting called to order at 10:12am – We have a quorum (6 voting members)  
Business Item 1: Adopting Minutes

Minutes from last meeting (March 27, 2019) were circulated and reviewed by board members. ***Motion to adopt minutes without edits made by Sean M., and seconded by Will S. Approved unanimously.***

*Harriet arrived at 10:15am. There are now seven voting members present.*

Business Item #2: Discussion of Public Hearing during Legislative Session on February 4, 2020

Allan B. provided an overview on the tremendous amount of public outreach (outlined in document titled “Proposed Rockland County Agricultural District Public Outreach” submitted for the record- **see attached**) during which the board encountered nothing but positive support for the creation of an agricultural district, there were concerns raised at the public hearing before the Legislative vote. Comments were supportive of creating

an ag district in concept, but concerns were raised about the possibility of industrial slaughterhouses being part of the agricultural district.

Clarification from Linda G. on understanding the current New York State Law as it relates to protections provided by agricultural districts:

- Stand-alone animal slaughterhouses cannot be included in an agricultural district.
- A farm that is already part of an agricultural district that raises livestock could add a slaughterhouse to their operation and still be part of the agricultural district.
- If a farm added a slaughterhouse, all livestock processed as part of that operation would have to be raised on that farm. In other words, livestock raised off-site would not be permitted to be slaughtered at such a facility.

The Legislature and County Executive are still generally supportive of the proposal to create an agricultural district. However, A. Beers requested that the Legislative vote on the proposed agricultural district be delayed until additional research on the impacts could be reviewed.

After discussion, the following motion was proposed:

*As a result of the Public Hearing on the proposed creation of a Rockland County Agricultural District held by the Rockland County Legislature on February 4, 2020, the Rockland County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board respectfully requests that the proposal to create an Agricultural District be held in abeyance at this time. The Board will work with the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets and the Rockland County Department of Law to address the concerns raised at the Public Hearing. **A motion to adopt the proposed motion was made by John M. and seconded by Sean M. Approved unanimously.***

Next Steps

- Meet with representative from CUPON (Citizens United to Protect our Neighborhoods) who expressed concerns at the Public Hearing. (Mac, Will, Sean all expressed interest in participating in this meeting).
- Explore the possibility of landowners in proposed agricultural district offering Rockland County the right of first refusal through the Open Space Acquisition Program, if they decide to sell their property.
- Follow up with representatives from New York State Agriculture & Markets about the language of the current law and how it might be shifted to better fit urban counties.

**The board is in agreement that a commercial slaughterhouse would not be appropriate to include in an agricultural district in this county and is inconsistent with our mission to protect and preserve farmland.**

***At 11:30am, Harriet C. moved to adjourn the meeting, Doug S. seconded. Meeting is adjourned.***

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Next meeting date TBD.

*Minutes submitted respectfully by Will Summers, Secretary.*