

Thursday, January 20, 2011

Town of Ballston Farmland Protection Plan:

Open Forum:

-Following current Ag district:

Where is/are Ag districts? What does that designation mean?

Can you operate a farm out of the Ag district? Answer, "Yes!"

If you stopped farming a farm, can you go back? "Yes, but obviously not if it has been developed for another use."

-Funding:

Are there funds available for the Purchase of Development Rights program?

Has any farm in our town participated?

-Farm market value:

How is the value of the Development Rights determined?

-Farm Preservation and Protection Plan funding?

State funded the protection plan fund until now with grant money.

Plan in place to attempt to get funding to complete our plan because towns that have plans are priority in the PDR and Ag & Mkts. requires the plan be in place in the Town before application is accepted.

-Development rights

Economy change has forced developments rights program to slow – no funding (\$\$)

-Keep farms in operation without having to sell off the development rights:

-Zoning changes to make it easier.

-Reduce government intervention.

-Help the farms become profitable.

-Tax breaks

-Ability to be profitable and continue to farm is essential

Bumper Stickers: No Land, No Farm, No Food

-Wish the government would leave farms alone

-Where does the money come from? From Tax Payers!!!

- CCE is struggling because of budget cuts.
 - Saratoga County is the premiere Horse county in NY State.
 - State took away funds for the Equine Educator for Saratoga County; but the County Board of Supervisors just refunded the position.
- Who are we serving? – Farmers boundaries, developers, residents? Must find a balance.
- Incentives – All about \$\$\$
- Committee can explore alternatives where the town might handle the incentive part of funding instead of the state.
 - Survey done in 2006 as part of drafting the Comprehensive Plan (Master Plan) residents overwhelmingly responded they want to preserve the rural/agricultural nature of the town and were willing to pay higher taxes to do it.
 - Another option would be a TRD - transfer of development rights.
- Rt 50 Corridor – Commercial development. Development there will broaden the tax base.
- GlobalFounries – What will this bring to the town?
- We must consider planned development in order to have money to do anything.
- We must find a way to make keeping land in agriculture as lucrative as developing it.
- Read Town of Charlton Protection Plan – Useful info
- All farmers are looking for is a “fair” price for their product –
 - What are farmers doing to promote their products?
 - Enhance the value of the product that is being produced
 - Most would prefer that the government did not tell farmers how to do it
 - Farmers’ markets downstate are lucrative
 - Upstate/local markets are “band-aids”
- Open land to the public and people will come. We need to protect landowners from trespassers, vandalism, lawsuits.
- Zoning is important, but so is enforcement.

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