

Town of Butler Agricultural & Comprehensive Plan

Notes from Steering Committee Meeting - August 4, 2008

Discussion from public and landowner meetings

- Farmland owners as well as members of the general public attended the public informational meeting on July 7 and the landowner outreach meeting on July 15.
- Some Committee members were disappointed in the number of participants.

Review draft analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Barbara Johnston distributed a draft summary. (Copy attached)

- Add to list of “strengths”: Road system can handle heavy trucks, such as milk haulers; Low density population; Access to NYS Thruway via Route 89
- Add to list of “threats”: Purchase of land by NYS DEC to expand wetlands; Uncertain market for ethanol

Overview of Existing Plans, Programs and Regulations

Barbara Johnston distributed a brief summary of existing programs and regulations that affect agriculture in Butler. (Copy attached.)

Outreach Plan

Barbara Johnston led a discussion regarding outreach to farmers and landowners.

Suggested farmers to interview:

- Phil Wagner – Fruit
- Bob Norris – Fruit
- Noah Martin – Mennonite/ Fruit
- Carol Merrell – Livestock/ Dairy
- Delmar Rudd – Hogs
- Dave Harper – Cash Crop
- Jack Stoll – muck (onions) and vegetables

Barbara distributed a list of interview questions for discussion (copy attached). The Committee suggested distributing the list of questions to all farmers and landowners in the Town.

Discussion followed regarding the best way to determine the extent of land that is rented for agricultural use. For example, Merrell Farms a total of 4,700 acres, some of which is rented, including some land owned by the NYS DEC.

Trends/ Issues

- Andy Wadsworth – operates an egg farm in neighboring Town that may enlarge to 4,000 acres. This would put pressure on land in Butler. This operation buys corn from local farmers. Hedge rows are being eliminated as part of the expansion.
- Marshall Farms – includes some operations within the Town of Butler
- Two sawmills operate in the Town. Support agricultural operations through crate manufacturing

Infrastructure issues

- Public water can be beneficial to farmers – see experience with Rose
- Marshall Farms – working with Wayne County IDA to address problems with insufficient water pressure
- Roads – all suitable to handle heavy loads such as milk haulers

Other issues relating to agriculture

- Difficult to farm near residential neighbors
- DEC purchasing land to expand wetlands

Public Forum on South Butler

- Monday, September 15. Will be held in the Fire Hall in South Butler
- Topics to address:
 - History/ historic resources: Invite Dorothy Higgins, Town Historian
 - Housing conditions and maintenance
 - Expansion of Lighthouse Church

- Infrastructure – No public water or sewer is available in the Hamlet. Address options, such as a community well.
- Flyer to announce meeting and invite residents will be distributed to every household in the Hamlet

Roundtable Discussion on Business Development and Infrastructure

- Monday, October 6 at the Town Hall
- Potential speakers: Marty Aman, Wayne County Sewer & Water Authority; Mayor of Wolcott; Peg Churchill, Wayne County Economic Development
- Issues:
 - Route 104 needs infrastructure. Public water serves area, but pressure is insufficient. Potential for hotel development, but infrastructure improvements needed. Fast Trac made an agreement with the Village of Wolcott to extend a water line in exchange for a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). Other businesses in this area purchase water directly from the Village of Wolcott, using the line that Fast Trac paid to extend.
 - DOT limits access to Route 104. Potential for parallel access road. Example is the rear of Harbec Plastics in Ontario.