

Caroline Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2022

The Caroline Agriculture Committee meeting was held in person at the Caroline Town Hall on April 9, 2022 beginning at 2:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Liaison to Agriculture Committee, Councilmember Katherine Goldberg
Agriculture Committee member Andrew Dygert
Agriculture Committee member Emily Adams
Agriculture Committee member Matt Mix
Community member Pete Hoyt
Community member Jonathan Snow
Community member Anne Dygert

Recording Secretary:

Councilmember Katherine Goldberg

Discussion regarding committee structure, leadership and meeting schedule

Katherine will continue to send agenda ahead of scheduled meetings and take minutes.

Committee members may send agenda items for inclusion ahead of meetings to either committee chair and/or Google Group to share with all. Meeting length agreed upon as 1.5 hours per meeting.

Various potential meeting schedules were discussed; second Sunday of the month was determined to be most agreeable for all in attendance. Meeting time TBD. 10 am was proposed; however, need to discuss with other committee members.

**Andrew Dygert was appointed Chair of Local Agriculture Committee by resolution at April 13 board meeting.*

Discussion regarding Agricultural Plastics Recycling

Andrew Dygert shared information regarding Ag plastics recycling from initial research and communication with community partners. Cornell had program which has been defunct for 6-7 years; the only remnant is Madison County Waste Management. Andrew is in contact with Kristin Welch who was very helpful. Biggest issue is having someone to receive the plastics

Cyclx subsidiary of Aglyx - may be a project of Exxon; Cyclx trying to be an intermediary between people who are interested in finding homes for specific lots of plastic and whoever is accepting it. Discussed what sort of scale is necessary? Need to provide a rough estimate of what Caroline's volume might be. Discussed different Ag plastics, what may/may not be accepted - i.e. small bale twine.

Does the town need to buy a baler, accumulate compressed plastic? Discuss storage options & requirements. Exact procedure TBD.

Action step: Determine if Town of Caroline has contract with anyone for trash?

Discussion regarding land use, agricultural interests and current zoning proposal

Matt Mix shared thoughts regarding Ag in Caroline: where it has been, where it is now, where it is going. Discussed variety of uses which are proposed as concerning/risky/undesirable, that would not be able to come into Caroline due to occupied land base, watershed, topographic realities, etc. For example, CAFO and/or commercial landfill, swine, meat birds - no processing facility anywhere close.

Discussed idea that "agriculture in this town should be pretty much hands off". Other approaches?

Consider the fundamental question, "Is the goal of Ag land preservation in Caroline realistic or even right?" Are there other uses for it?

Discussed three basic outcomes for land: *land to development, land to brush, or encourage agriculture*

Consider the big things versus simple things which encourage Ag - i.e. Ag plastics recycling. What other similar initiatives can we think about?

Revisit discussion of food justice/food sovereignty as practical, actionable steps to get behind Ag in Caroline. Discussed how to identify the issues and communicate them to town leadership.

Action step: Committee requests meeting with Town Board to discuss pertinent concerns related to land use and agriculture in Caroline

***Reminder of previous discussion regarding zoning and related feedback to commission/board**

How and when to provide feedback? Re-emphasized importance of providing feedback to shape the potential zoning law currently under discussion; those who are engaged in agriculture and understand the community are best positioned to provide realistic feedback.

Action Item: Research agricultural zoning tools and impacts, look for municipalities which are similar to Caroline, what has/hasn't worked?

Items of interest:

https://www.michaelwklemens.com/_files/ugd/07aaf7_275c6902c48e4dc798bc15cef0b864c0.pdf
(Open Lands Acquisition: Local Financing Techniques Under New York State)

https://s30428.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/P4A_FINAL_lo_res_1-21-11_1.pdf
(Planning for Agriculture in New York State: A Toolkit for Towns and Counties)

https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/remediation_hudson_pdf/overlayzones.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0tmzHPJ4h1OAKUMQmyi5FH84u_vJ18yEB_XpcV6Vf8eDAojdhim0rXGSQ
(Creating Conservation Overlay Zoning: A Guide for Communities in the Hudson River Estuary Watershed)

https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/publications/pdf/smart_growth.pdf
(Smart Growth in New York State: A Discussion Paper)

<https://smartgrowth.org/farms-under-threat-the-state-of-the-states/>
(Farms Under Threat: The State of the States, American Farmland Trust)

<https://farmland.org/project/the-alliance-for-new-yorks-farmland/>
(The Alliance for New York's Farmland)

NEXT MEETING will be held in Town Hall, Sunday May 8(?) time TBD
(Tentative...May 8th is Mother's Day...stay tuned)

---Adjourn at 4:00 PM---

Respectfully submitted,
Katherine J. Goldberg