



Sullivan County Agriculture and Sustainability Policy Committee

September 6, 2012 AGENDA

1:30 PM

Committee Members:

Cindy Kurpil Gieger, Chair, Cora Edwards, Vice-Chair, Jonathan Rouis, Alan Sorensen, Kitty Vetter

Reports:

1. Agricultural Planner Report – Jen Mall
2. SASD Monthly Report – Dick Riseling
3. Catskill Edible Garden Project – Catskill Mountainkeeper

Presentation:

1. HVAB Incubator Without Walls Website

Discussion:

1. NYS Initiatives and Local Breweries
2. Dairy/Value added Grant Opportunities
3. Ash Tree Seed Saver Project - Kristin Porter, Director of Parks and Recreation
4. Bio Mass Fuel Symposium – Steven Stuart, SASD

Resolutions:

None

Public Comment

Ag Planner Projects:

Ag and Sustainability: Regular meetings with OSE and DPW. Met August 14 to discuss proposed biomass workshop.

Dairy Processing RBEG: Issued RFP on August 10. Have been contacting dairy farmers by phone or in person to verify that they've received the RFP and answer any questions they might have. Spoke with Mike Sakell on the Ag and Garden Report Saturday 8/18, to help publicize the RFP. Proposals are due October 12.

Microenterprise Assistance Program Grant: Met with all applicants and Assistant County Attorney to discuss, finalize and execute grant contracts. Executed one ag contract, working out details of two others, and two other grantees have left the program. Working with County Attorney's Office, OMB and the MAP Review Committee to determine how to distribute grant funds left by those who have left the program. Currently processing drawdown requests for grantees who have executed contracts and requested advancement or reimbursement of funds.

Ag Revolving Loans: Regular attendance at RLF Advisory Board meetings, site visits and recommendations regarding ag loan applications. One pending application for an agri-business loan, scheduled meeting September 5 to vote on this.

Recent Events & Happenings:

CCE: Attended Down on the Farm Day Saturday 8/4 at Stone Wall Farms in Jeffersonville. Served on interview committee for new livestock educator position. Great candidates, but CCE will need to conduct another round of interviews in the near future due to some technical difficulties.

Farm Visits: Visiting farms and agri-businesses that have received the MAP awards, to establish relationships and monitoring protocols. Visited dairy farms to discuss dairy processing RFP. Visited farms on 8/30 as part of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy project, to gauge their opinions on agricultural economic development.

Ag Advisory Board: had its second meeting August 27. Excellent discussion and guest speakers. Next meeting September 17, time TBD.

Website: New section on the Ag page of the DPEM website—"Current Funding Opportunities." working with MIS, partnership, legislature and County Manager to develop web resources for businesses, to help them navigate the process of deciding their business structure, obtaining permits and approvals, etc.

Farmland Protection: Attended the August 15 meeting of the Liberty Agricultural Advisory Committee. They've developed a website, www.libertyagriculture.org and are working to develop content.

Westchester Taste Our Local Harvest Event: met with SC Farm Network, SC Visitors Association and representatives of the Chefs Association of Westchester/ Lower Connecticut on August 2 to discuss ways for our farmers to participate in this tasting event, coming up on October 9. A great opportunity for farmers to meet regional chefs, introduce their products to them, and perhaps forge new relationships for sales and marketing. Distributed event information to my ag contacts, and met with several farmers at farmers markets and other local events to encourage participation.

Upcoming Events:

Farmstock: working farm tours are underway throughout the summer and into September.

Biomass/ PV Forum: scheduled for September 21, details TBA. Coordinated by the Office of Sustainable Energy.