



Sullivan County Agriculture and Sustainability Policy Committee

February 11, 2016 AGENDA
1:30 PM

Committee Members:

Catherine Owens, Chair, Nadia Rasjz, Vice-Chair, Mark McCarthy, Terri Ward, Scott Samuelson

Call to Order

Attendance

Comments: Committee Chair

Reports:

1. Agricultural Report- Melinda Meddaugh
2. Office of Sustainable Energy (OSE) Monthly Report- Carol Roig & Stephen Stuart

Presentation:

1. AG District Overview

Discussion: None

Resolutions: None

Public Comment

Adjourn

Priority Initiative #1 Building Capacity, Organization, and Collaboration

Many of the problems, or lack of solution to known problems in the County, stem from not having the capacity, communication, and collaboration in place to support implementation. Agencies and organizations involved with agriculture, both within the County and the region, need to work together, efficiently use the many existing talents of staff and volunteers, find ways to eliminate duplication and fill gaps in programs, and build relationships. This initiative is a foundation for success in implementation.

IMMEDIATE-TERM YEAR 1: 2015/2016

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES
1.1 Establish and create the Agricultural BR&E Program Coordinator position. See Priority Initiative 2 actions.	Legislature AFPB, Ag Task Force, CCE, Planning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislature approved funds in 2016 budget Position posted until February 19 	Continuation dependent upon funding.
1.2 Continue to support and fund HVADC, CCESC, and Sullivan County SWCD so that they can continue to provide or expand programming that supports farms.	Legislature HVADC, CCE, SWCD	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passed in 2016 budget 	
1.3 Continue to promote CCESC as a major resource / one-stop shop for agricultural information in Sullivan County.	CCE Legislature, all partners listed in Key	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 weekly radio spots (farm report) Monthly newsletter Monthly e-news CCE website Farm Visits Weekly press releases 	
1.4 Disseminate and coordinate information resources. Create and maintain an email/distribution list of all agencies and organizations involved in agricultural-related programs. Use a website, twitter, or blogs to share information among these entities. This should include consolidating farmer and agri-business mailing lists and email lists from agencies and organizations within the County to create a single comprehensive list that can be used.	CCE Legislature, all partners listed in key	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maple Producers List Farmers Market List Vegetable Producers List Christmas Tree Producers List Adopted CivCRM as constituent management system, build in progress 	Currently have a program assistant helping the CCE Ag staff to create the ag database and inventory SC farms
1.5 Regularly convene a meeting of implementation partners to discuss these priority project needs and assign lead agencies to carry out specific actions.	AFPB CCE, Planning, SCVA, FarmNetwork, IDA, Legislature	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Ag Task Force meetings 	Held yearly Ag Partner Meeting on January 19th
1.6 Create an Agriculture Task Force to spearhead implementation and guide efforts.	AFPB CCE, Planning, Legislature	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets monthly 	

**IMMEDIATE TERM
YEAR 1: 2015/2016**

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES
1.7	Schedule quarterly multi-county meetings between Planning staff, HVADC, CCE, and others as needed to facilitate more coordination between the counties in the region	Planning CCE, HVADC, Regional Planning Departments	In progress	Working with Planning Dept. to set up a fall meeting	
1.8	Build staffing capacity in order to assist farmers and agribusinesses with production and technical assistance.	Legislature AFPB, Planning, CCE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ag BR&E position search currently open through Feb. 19 CCE secured temporary part time program assistant through USDA 	Contingent upon funding
1.9	Create an executive summary and brochure of the plan	Planning CCE, AFBP	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Summary Complete Brochure being printed 	

Priority Initiative #2: Agricultural Business Retention and Expansion Program

Business Retention and expansion is one of the core components of economic development programs. The purpose of a BR&E program is to communicate with local businesses in order to understand, anticipate, and ultimately address their needs, challenges, and opportunities. The agricultural business retention and expansion program will be tied to, and will in fact be critical factor in the success of, many activities and projects related to agricultural economic development.

**IMMEDIATE-TERM
YEAR 1: 2015/2016**

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES
2.1	Develop marketing tools, including a website with links to programs and resources for farmers (see below).	CCE Planning, Pure Catskills, SCVA, USDA, CADE,	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCE Website SCPEM Website Secured Farmers Market Promotion grant 	Promoting Catskill Farmlink and Hudson Valley Farmland Finder website. Attended Cornell Strategic Marketing Conference to develop marketing classes for 2016 programming
2.2	Develop the Agricultural Business Retention and Expansion Program. Hire staff.	CCE/Planning AFPB, Legislature	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position posted through February 19. Task Force to review applications. 	Offering Ag Business Series for 2016. Classes include: Business Structures, Business Planning, Farm Leases & Farm Funding.

**SHORT-TERM
YEARS 2 & 3: 2016 - 2017**

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
2.4 Develop an initial database of farms in Sullivan County	CCE Planning, Farm Bureau	<p>In progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CivCRM adopted as constituent management system • Civi build in progress • Staff training in progress • Drafted farmer survey to collect commodity/production data • Released farmer survey to the public (data entry: March) • Data Collected: Maple Farmers, Vegetable Producers, dairy farmers, Christmas Tree Farmers
2.5 Develop a business visitation program.	CCE Planning, AFPB	<p>In progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal and requested farm visits occurring weekly by Ag staff & ED • Formal paper survey drafted & released • CCE Ag Outreach Packet outline completed, packet materials ordered and in house • Web survey in development
2.7 Provide farmers with general business support and assistance	CCE Planning, IDA, SC Partnership, SC Chamber, HVADC, CADE	<p>In Progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/1/15-12/30/15: 1000 inquiries answered at CCE • 40 farm visits, 15 workshops • Informal and requested farm visits occurring weekly by CCE Ag staff & ED • Formal paper and online survey drafted • CCE Ag Outreach Packet outline completed, folders on order • Web survey in progress
2.8 Work with CDC to assist farmers with farm worker recruitment and connect them to people looking for agricultural employment.	CWD Planning, CCE, CADE, Glynwood	<p>Working to develop listing to develop livestock list</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailing going out to livestock farmers to collect further information
		<p>Staff are creating folders for farm visits, which will have a survey and resources. Staff created a survey to go out to all SC farmers. One of the questions asks if they would like a CCE farm visit.</p>
		<p>Developing an Ag Business Series of Classes for 2016</p>

2.9	Collaborate regularly with agency partners to provide referrals, follow-up, etc.	CCE/Planning Agency Partners	In progress		Scheduled an Ag partner meeting for January 19th
2.11	Simplify existing agri-business loan fund programs. Revise application forms and program descriptions so that they are easier to understand and more "farmer-friendly."	Planning IDA, SC Partnership, HVADC, USDA, CCE	In progress	Working with Planning Dept. to develop loan program brochure	Loan brochure in the process of getting printed
2.13	Work with agency partners to develop communication tools.	CCE/Planning Agency Partners			
2.14	Establish a website as a portal to programs, resources, and support for farmers in Sullivan County, preferably with a simple, easy to remember URL.	CCE Planning	In progress	CCE is in the process of updating our website. Planning updated their website to include more info on ag districts & ag assessment	

Priority Initiative #3: Agritourism Enhancement

This program will entail moving agritourism to the forefront. It will include new opportunities for both farmers and visitor's, as well as leveraging existing efforts such as Pure Catskill, Made in Sullivan County Catskills, tourism marketing and promotion, mapping and wayfinding, lodging and special events. There is a need to develop new agritourism products, experiences, and events;leverage the resources of and coordinate with existing organizations involved in agriculture and tourism; and make the County more "tourism friendly". This would provide additional opportunities for farmers to diversify and increase their incomes, while bringing valuable external dollars into the County.

IMMEDIATE-TERM
YEAR 1: 2015/2016

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES
3.1	Create an Agritourism Task Force	SCVA CCE, Planning, Farm Network,			
3.4	Updates the Fresh from the Farm agricultural trail map online	SCVA CCE, Planning, Farm Network	Complete	SCVA completed summer 2015	

**SHORT-TERM
YEARS 2 & 3: 2016/2017**

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES
3.3	Work with CCE and other partners to provide training (and assessment) on developing an agritourism enterprise.	CCE SCVA, Pure Catskills, Farm Network, Farm Credit East			Working to create agri-tourism workshop for 2016. Ag tourism workshop will be AG-Tourism 101 and will cover the basics of ag tourism for farmers. Working to provide a fact sheet for the public so that they are educated about farm safety in SC
3.2	Increase the participation of Sullivan County farms in Pure Catskills and/or Hudson Valley Bountly.	Pure Catskills CCE, HVADC	In progress	Developing a workplan and timeline for this	Connected with these organizations, receiving information to provide to farmers, promoting in CCE newsletter. Sent out monthly email to contacts and putting their info in our farm packets. Working on creating a small scale food processors conference, with Pure Catskills as a partner.
3.5	Expand marketing of farms, farmers' markets, farmstands, distilleries and breweries, etc., through facebook,	SCVA CCE, Planning, HVADC	In progress	Completed farmers market brochure. Planning Dept. applied to a Farmers Market promotion grant	Coordinated a farmers market manager meeting and developing the RFP for the grant.

Priority #4: New/Young Farmer Program

New farmers face barriers in four major areas including access to training, education and technical assistance, access to land, access to capital and credit and access to markets. New farmers need programs and services that enable them to acquire the information and resources they need to succeed. There is a need for an expanded effort to recruit new farmers to Sullivan County. This program represents a concerted effort to "sell" Sullivan County as a good place to farm, targeted to young farmers and the next generation of farmers.

**IMMEDIATE-TERM
YEARS 1: 2015/2016**

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES	
4.7	Promote existing Sullivan County agribusiness loan programs and work to help new and expanding farmers understand and participate in these programs.	Planning CCE, IDA, Partnership, HVADC, Chamber, CMK	In progress	Planning Dept. created loan program brochure. In the printing process.	In progress
4.3	Adapt the Orange County New Farmer Manual for use in Sullivan County.	CCE	In progress	Staff are starting to gather information for this manual	Developing narrative for manual
4.4	Create fact sheets with information gleaned from this plan, and resources from Cornell and other research that outlines market opportunities that may be viable for new farmers.	CCE Planning			
4.8	Increase programmatic support for Cornell Cooperative Extension educational programs in 4-H to build interest among youth in agriculture.	Legislature CCE, Planning	In progress	SC Youth Bureau awarded \$4800 NYS OCFS OYD funds to 4-H in 2015. 2016 application submitted	

**SHORT-TERM
YEARS 2 & 3: 2016/2017**

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES
4.1	Provide technical training in farming to take advantage of emerging markets.	CCE Planning, HVADC, CADE, Glynwood, BOCES		CCE receives inquiries on a regular basis about new markets, such as mushroom production, hops and small grains. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted SARE grant to explore growing small grains 	Provide technical assistance and info to these beginner farmers. Working with Soil and Water to offer small grain programs for 2016. Attended a Cornell Strategic Marketing Conference LFPP staff attended Cornell Food Safety conference
4.6	Provide incentives, and advertise existing funding opportunities for farm start-up operations.	Legislature Planning, IDA, Partnership, USDA, CMK			Working on brochure and farm packets
4.12	Work with the real property and tax departments of the County to identify and remove farm properties from the Tax Foreclosure list. Tie this program to a requirement that the interested farmer go through a beginner farmer training program.	Planning Legislature, CCE, Glynwood, HVADC		Planning and CCE staff are looking into other models in the state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted USDA BFFO application to support staff & county in this particular work
4.18	Utilize NYFarmlink.com, Catskill Farmlink, and Hudson Valley Farm Link, an existing established site to post farms and farmland for sale.	CCE Planning, WAC, American Farmland Trust, Glynwood	In progress	Promote these websites to CCE inquiries. Putting their brochures in our farm packets.	
4.9	Convene a meeting of school district officials to discuss mechanisms to get schools involved in agriculture.	CCE Planning, Sullivan Renaissance, BOCES, SCDPH, SCCC, CMK	In progress	Working on a Farm to Institution Planning grant. As part of the grant, we are interviewing school districts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Farm to School meetings, 	Accepted into statewide training to provide Market Readiness Training for SC Farmers

Priority Initiative #5: Value-Added and Diversification Initiative

This program has two parts. The first is to take agricultural initiatives already underway and make them successful. This part is oriented to good organization, planning, coordination with farmers, getting the right operators, and marketing. The second part is oriented to providing farms with training, business planning, and assistance in identifying and understanding market opportunities, and helping farmers take advantage of funding that can be used for value-added processing, diversification and expansion. This initiative will work in conjunction with the Agricultural Business Retention and Expansion Program and the New/Young Farmer Program.

IMMEDIATE-TERM YEAR 1: 2015/2016

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES
5.7 Continue to develop and operate the new CCE Entrepreneurial & Teaching (EaT) Kitchen.	CCE Sullivan Renaissance, BOCES	Complete/ ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/1/15-12/30/15 150 inquiries answered, 7 workshops offered, 3 regular business user, 2 on deck with Ag & Markets • USDA LFPP RFP submitted & received to offset rental and course fees • Annual calendar of food entrepreneur business development workshops scheduled 	Working with SCCC, Catskill Mountaineer and Pure Catskills, SCFMA to develop a small food processor workshop for October 21 2016. -Another small business is now using the kitchen
5.2 Work with Sullivan County dairy farmers and establish niche dairy and value-added dairy products to support the dairy industry in the County.	CCE Planning, HVADC, IDA, CADE	In progress	Working with Planning Dept. to provide technical assistance for dairy processing project	Finalizing dairy processing project

5.3	Promote the red meat processing facility in Liberty to livestock farms in Sullivan County and other adjacent counties.	CCE IDA, Planning, AFPB, HVADC	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED on RFP review committee RFP went out, applications under review 	
5.9	Tap into expertise available at Cornell University, SUNY Sullivan and other regional colleges and universities to help farmers diversify their operations and develop new products and services.	CCE/SUNY Sullivan BOCES	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cornell Farm to School program: monthly meetings, draft production/price point survey, SUNY Sullivan/New Hope Farm being established Cornell attendance at CCE Neversink Farms Tour 	
5.1 1	Continue to work with and develop the high tunnel program at CCE, and develop a funding mechanism for farmers to purchase high tunnels after completing training.	CCE Sullivan Renaissance, Planning, IDA, Partnership, BOCES, CMK, NRCS	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High tunnel construction completed June 2015 Planted June 2015 Workshop August & November SUNY Sullivan application for high tunnel development/on campus farm 	Developing workshops for 2016 BOCES students harvesting spinach and using it for their culinary class
5.2	Support diversification or value added production/expansion through Sullivan County's Agr-Business Revolving Loan Fund.	Planning CCE, IDA, Partnership, CMK	In progress	Inserting County Revolving Loan program brochure in Farm Visit packets	

**SHORT-TERM
YEARS 2 & 3: 2016/2017**

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES
5.4	Determine the potential demand for other facilities or services to piggy-back on the red meat processing facility.	HVADC Planning, IDA, CCE			
5.10	Develop and publicize a catalog of potential niche/specialty crops that can be grown in Sullivan County. Create demonstration plots to showcase and allow sampling or use of niche/specialty crops.	CCE HVADC, Cornell		Working with Soil and Water Conservation District on grant to do trials on grains for distilleries	
5.1	Facilitate the development of specialty farm operations and products.	CCE HVADC			Ag BR&E Role

Priority Initiative #6: Buy Local Initiative

This initiative is aimed at improving the local sales of and demand for fresh, local foods. Project components include farm-to-table, farm-to-institution, and farm to business programs, as well as local marketing/public relations and a Sullivan Fresh initiative to highlight businesses that use or sell local produce and products. Although direct sales of agricultural products in Sullivan County increased dramatically, the amount of revenue should be significantly higher. Sale of farm products to institutions should also be strengthened. There is also a need to better educate consumers in Sullivan County about the benefits of eating fresh, local foods.

IMMEDIATE-TERM YEAR 1: 2015/2016

		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES
6.1	Develop a Sullivan Fresh initiative. This program reaches out to local businesses and a) works to match their needs with local products, and b) provides a "Sullivan Fresh" logo or tag line that they can use to advertise the fact that local agricultural products are sold or used.	Planning SCVA, CCE, Pure Catskills, Chamber	Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with Pure Catskills, interested in building on the Fresh from the Catskills work. SCVA offered art work and assistance on this as well. 	Interviewing consultants for Farmers Market marketing project. In the process of acquiring bids for branding/logo.
6.7	As part of the Sullivan Fresh Initiative. Create a Sullivan County Buy Local initiative, message, and tag line for promotion.	Planning SCVA, CCE, Pure Catskills, Chamber	See above		
6.8	Develop a Pride of Sullivan or Sullivan Fresh marketing/media plan to advertise these farms and farm products to the general public. Develop a campaign kit that farmers receive when they participate. These could include posters, stickers, or table tents. *MARKETING TOOL	Planning SCVA, CCE, Pure Catskills, Chamber	See above	Through Farmers Market promotion grant, we can begin to develop this initiative.	
6.9	Develop marketing brochures and rack cards promoting specific agricultural areas.	CCE SCVA, Planning, Pure Catskills, Chamber	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maple complete Farmers Market Complete Veg Producers Complete Christmas Trees Complete 	Commodities: Livestock, Honey, Dairy, Forestry, etc. Progress dependent on funding for each brochure

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES
6.2	Concentrate on expanding farmer participation in the Pride of New York and Pure Catskills branding campaigns, and continue to distribute the Guide to Pure Catskills Products throughout Sullivan County.	Pure Catskills CCE, Planning, SCVA, Chamber		Developing a workplan for this	
6.4	Develop a local food procurement policy for Sullivan County agencies and institutions, possibly with a 10% or 20% local sourcing requirement.	Legislature Planning, CCE, BOCES, SCCC, SCDPH,		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCE Farm to Institution Planning Project to commence Oct/Nov 2015. Will collect data from local institutions re: challenges to local procurement & producers challenges to selling. Data will be used in 2017 on strategies to bridge gap. 	
6.5	Request that the County of Sullivan IDA encourage businesses receiving IDA assistance to commit to local purchasing agricultural commodities and/or in some way supporting local agriculture.	IDA CCE, Planning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested during red meat RFP development—no action thus far 	
6.6	Continue existing consumer education efforts and farmers' markets to help the public understand the importance of agriculture. Incorporate cooking demonstrations and other activities as appropriate to strengthen the connection with buying locally.	CCE SCFMA, Area Farmers Markets, SCDPH, Chamber, Planning, CMK		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers Market food demos offered regularly by MG Farmers Market brochures 	Additional food demo opps will begin when CHSC commences late 2015-2020. Developing educational programming schedule for 2016 farmers market season.

Farmland Preservation Strategies

While Sullivan County is not under intense development pressure, farmland loss still occurs due to both conversion to non-farm uses, as well as abandonment farmland. Although the best way to preserve farmland is to have economically successful farmers, the complexity of issues facing farmers today makes it imperative that farmlands remain available and cost effective to farmers, especially young and new farmers. In Sullivan County, land costs may be more of an issue than the lack of lands to farm. There is a great need for affordable and accessible land. There are many methods to address protecting farmland. Some strategies are direct land preservation techniques to promoting farm-friendly regulations and training for local officials.

SHORT-TERM YEARS 2 & 3: 2015/2016

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS	OUTPUTS	PROGRESS NOTES
7.4 Provide training for local officials: ⇒ Hold presentations for town officials to inform them of this plan and the tools it provides. Use the executive summary as a handout. ⇒ Provide training to planning boards and ZBAs about farming and evaluating project impacts on farming. ⇒ Provide information to towns about appointing an agricultural member to their planning board and encourage them to do so. ⇒ Provide a project review checklist for planning boards to use in evaluating projects that may impact farms or farmland. ⇒ Develop training and educational materials for assessors and for landowners to help them understand farm assessment practices and tax bills.	Planning CCE, HVADC		Reaching out to municipalities to let them know about the municipal planning grant through NYS Ag and Markets	Submitted two PDR applications for SC farmers
7.5 Provide for succession and transition planning so that farms remain active during transitions and transfer to a new generation.	CCE Planning, HVADC, Farm Credit East	Complete/ ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Succession workshop offered every other year through CCE 	

OSE Activities Report for February 2016
Reporting on January 2016

I. ENERGY MANAGEMENT FOR SC FACILITIES

NYPA Potential for HVAC replacement at SC Government Center

OSE has reviewed NYPA's proposal and met on Tuesday, January 26th with staff of DPW, Commissioner McAndrew, staff of NYPA and Pres Engineering to review the plan.

- Develop better cost analysis for the replacement of interior lighting with LEDs (to include NYSEDA Incentives and maintenance cost savings).
- Provide details on a possible LED demonstration project at the GC.
- Provide cost estimate for VAV replacement for the Legislature's consideration.

Hybrid Vehicles for SC Fleet

The County is testing the efficacy of two hybrid vehicles as part of its vehicle leasing contract with Enterprise.

Solar Installation at the Liberty Health and Community Services Campus

Work began Monday, November 30th on tree clearing of 10 acres for the 2.4MW solar array adjacent to the Adult care Center. Solar City estimates that the array will provide the County with energy cost savings of \$2.1 million over 20 years/\$91,907 per year.

Adult Care Center Energy Efficiency Measures

SASD is continuing to work with Shennoy Wellington at the Adult Care Center to develop energy saving strategies for the facility, including replacement of the PTAC units in patient rooms with more energy efficient PTHP units. This replacement is a priority project listed in the Sullivan County Climate Action Plan. Procurement options include: 1) issue an RFP for units matching NYSERDA specifications for efficiency; 2) utilize best value option that is now available for County purchases.

II. GRANT READINESS THROUGH CLEANER GREENER COMMUNITIES funding opportunities

SASD continues to work to help the County qualify for funding under NYS's *Cleaner, Greener Communities* funding initiative, and to work with NYSERDA to make sure counties have the opportunity to qualify. The deadline for applications for Category 2 is September 30, 2019, or sooner, if funds become exhausted. A 25% match is required, which can be dollars or in-kind. \$250,000 is the maximum for each application. We hope to re-submit an application for funding for a comprehensive space and energy study for county facilities, a priority project for the SC Division of Public Works.

Several threshold actions are not available to counties because home rule assigns control of those land-use actions to towns. SASD has contacted NYSERDA for clarification and NYSERDA has advised that they are revisiting the requirements. In the meantime, in 2016 we continue to work on the threshold actions that are available to Sullivan County. These efforts include:

- Developing a green fleet policy for County vehicles.
- C-PACE initiative (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy): C-PACE is a program of the Energy Improvement Corporation that enables eligible commercially owned buildings to secure financing for deep energy upgrades and renewable energy projects. PACE financing uses the existing property tax system to assess and collect finance payments on an annual or semi-annual basis. Energize NY has issued new guidelines regarding the Municipal Tax Delinquency Fund. Sullivan County has been invited to join Energize NY and implement a C-PACE program. SASD continues to help the County research the potential impact of the program for Sullivan County.

II. SULLIVAN COUNTY COMMUNITY CHOICE AGGREGATION (CCA)

We hope to receive approval from the Public Service Commission this month to move forward with the Sullivan County CCA. We continue to schedule presentations and town and village boards and community organizations, and to receive letters of support, which are uploaded to the PSC in an ongoing process.

We have letters or resolutions of support from the Towns of Bethel, Highland, Tusten and Delaware. Presentations have been given in the Towns of Liberty, Lumberland and Rockland. Over the next two months, we will give presentations to the town boards of Callicoon, Cochecton, Fallsburg, Forestburgh, Fremont, Mamakating, Neversink and Thompson. Groups that have provided letters of support include the SC IDA, SLAC, SUNY Sullivan and Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy.

III. CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES

Six SC towns have adopted the Climate Smart Communities Pledge and are working on a variety of energy initiatives. The Town of Tusten is moving forward with a solar array for municipal energy supply at their town garage under a Power Purchase Agreement. They have also secured energy audits from local contractors and will move forward with energy efficiency improvements at their town hall.

The Town of Bethel is moving forward with energy efficiency and lighting improvements at town buildings and with a formal policy regarding energy efficient vehicles for the town fleet.

In 2016, we anticipate a focus on several major initiatives:

- Street lighting conversions to LEDs;
- Energy Efficient Vehicles policy;
- Permitting for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations;
- Adoption of the NYS Unified Solar Permit;
- Developing local Climate Action Plans;
- Potential for Community-owned solar projects/shared generation.

IV. NY PRIZE Micro-Grid Projects Liberty and Monticello

Booz Allen Hamilton (BAH) will submit their Phase 1 Feasibility Studies for Liberty and Monticello by February 28, 2016. SASD continues to provide project support as requested by BAH. To the best of our knowledge, the Villages of Liberty and Monticello and all other stakeholders have provided the energy load information requested by BAH. The BAH team seems confident that at least one project will move to Phase II, an investment grade micro-grid design.

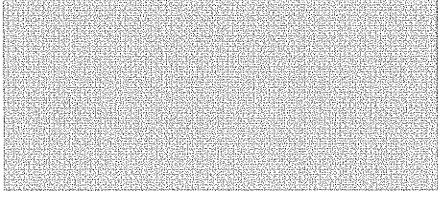
VI. Presentations and Community Education

January 8 and January 15: In response to requests from the public, Cornell Cooperative Extension organized two presentations to provide property owners and municipal officials with information on solar leasing for utility scale solar farms. SASD addressed solar technology, potential challenges re land use, zoning and interconnection, and provided information about new programs and incentives and alternative configurations for utility scale solar. We continue to respond to calls from property owners with questions about the nature of this leasing offer.

January 25: SASD participated in the Division of Planning's Roundtable for town officials at the Ethelbert Crawford Library in Monticello. SASD's presentation covered anticipated trends in renewable energy development and opportunities for towns to get support for updating their permitting processes for residential solar installations and EV charging stations. We are assisting the SC DPEM in developing model zoning code for utility scale solar installations.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

FEBRUARY 11, 2016



WHAT IS AN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT?

- NYS Agriculture & Markets Law ARTICLE 25AA
- Land that is included within an agricultural district has been recognized by the local and state governments as being viable farmland and an important resource.
- Land must be recommended for inclusion by the county farmland protection board, approved by the country legislature and certified by the Commissioner of Agriculture & Markets.

WHAT IS THE AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT LAW?

The Agricultural Districts Law was established to protect and promote a farmer's opportunity to operate a successful business. Under the Agricultural Districts Law farmers are provided:

- Protection from unreasonably restrictive local "anti-farming" laws
- Protection from nuisance lawsuits
- Limitations on eminent domain, other public projects, or private citizen construction projects

DEFINITION OF FARM OPERATION:

- The land and on-farm buildings, equipment, manure processing and handling facilities, and practices which contribute to the production, preparation and marketing of crops, livestock and livestock products as a commercial enterprise, including a “commercial horse boarding operation”, a “timber operation” and “compost, mulch or other biomass crops”.
- Such farm operation may consist of one or more parcels of owned or rented land, which parcels may be contiguous or noncontiguous to each other.

FREQUENTLY ASKED Q & A'S ABOUT AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

- **Does an agricultural district guarantee a farmer's "right to farm"?**
- **Do agricultural districts consist entirely of farmland?**
- **If my land is in an agricultural district, do I automatically receive its benefits?**
- **Does the agricultural district restrict me from doing certain things on my land?**

FREQUENTLY ASKED Q & A'S ABOUT
AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

- *Is the agricultural district part of zoning?*
- *Do agricultural districts eliminate a municipality's ability to control growth?*
- *Do agricultural districts consist entirely of farmland?*
- *Can government acquire or condemn farmland within an agricultural district against a landowner's wishes?*

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS & AG ASSESSMENT

What Is Ag Assessment?

- The agricultural assessment program allows eligible farmland located **both within and outside** agricultural districts to be taxed at its agricultural assessment, rather than at its fair market value.
- The agricultural assessment value establishes an “upper limit” for taxable assessments on eligible farmland. Any assessed value which exceeds the equalized agricultural assessment on the land may qualify for a reduced tax assessment. **Landowners must apply to their local town assessor annually for an agricultural assessment**

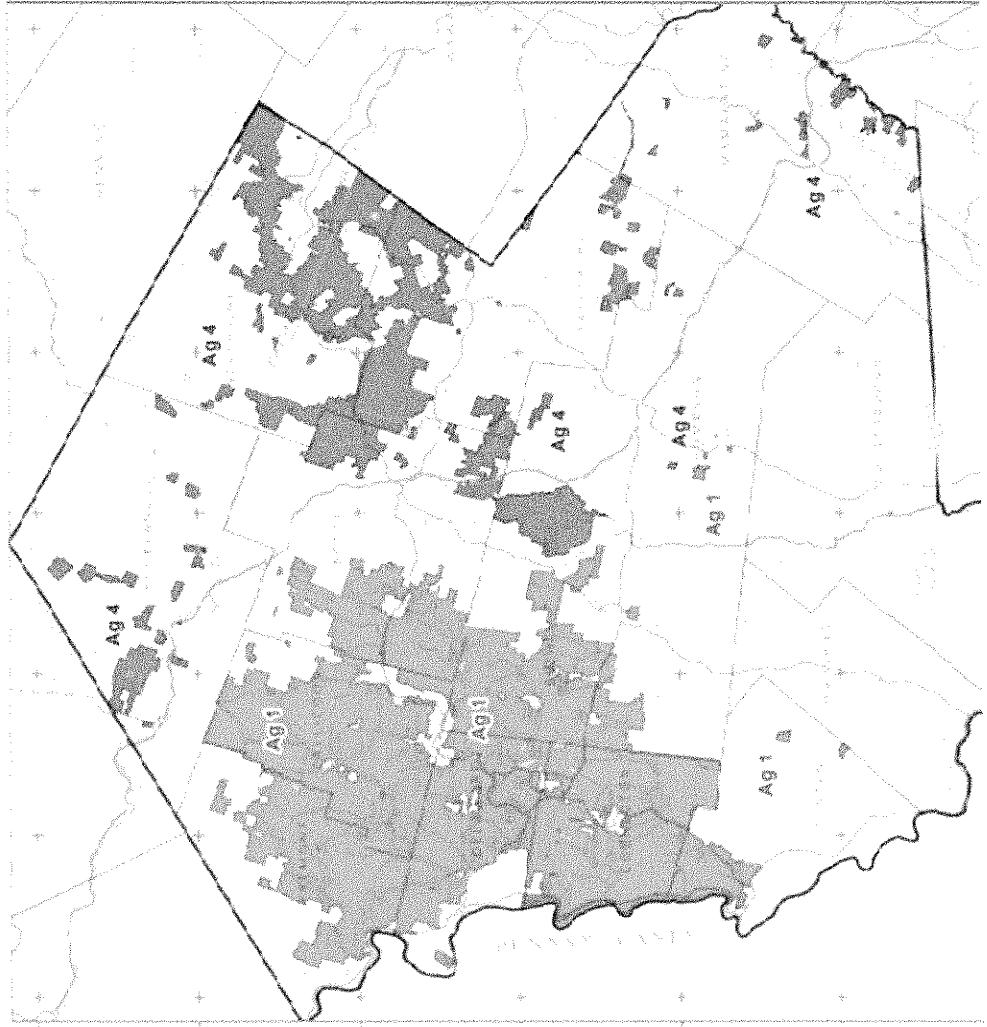
AG DISTRICT REVIEW PERIODS

- **Eight Year Review**
- **Every eight years, for each Ag District**
- **30 DAY WINDOW**
- **April 1st – April 30th of each year**

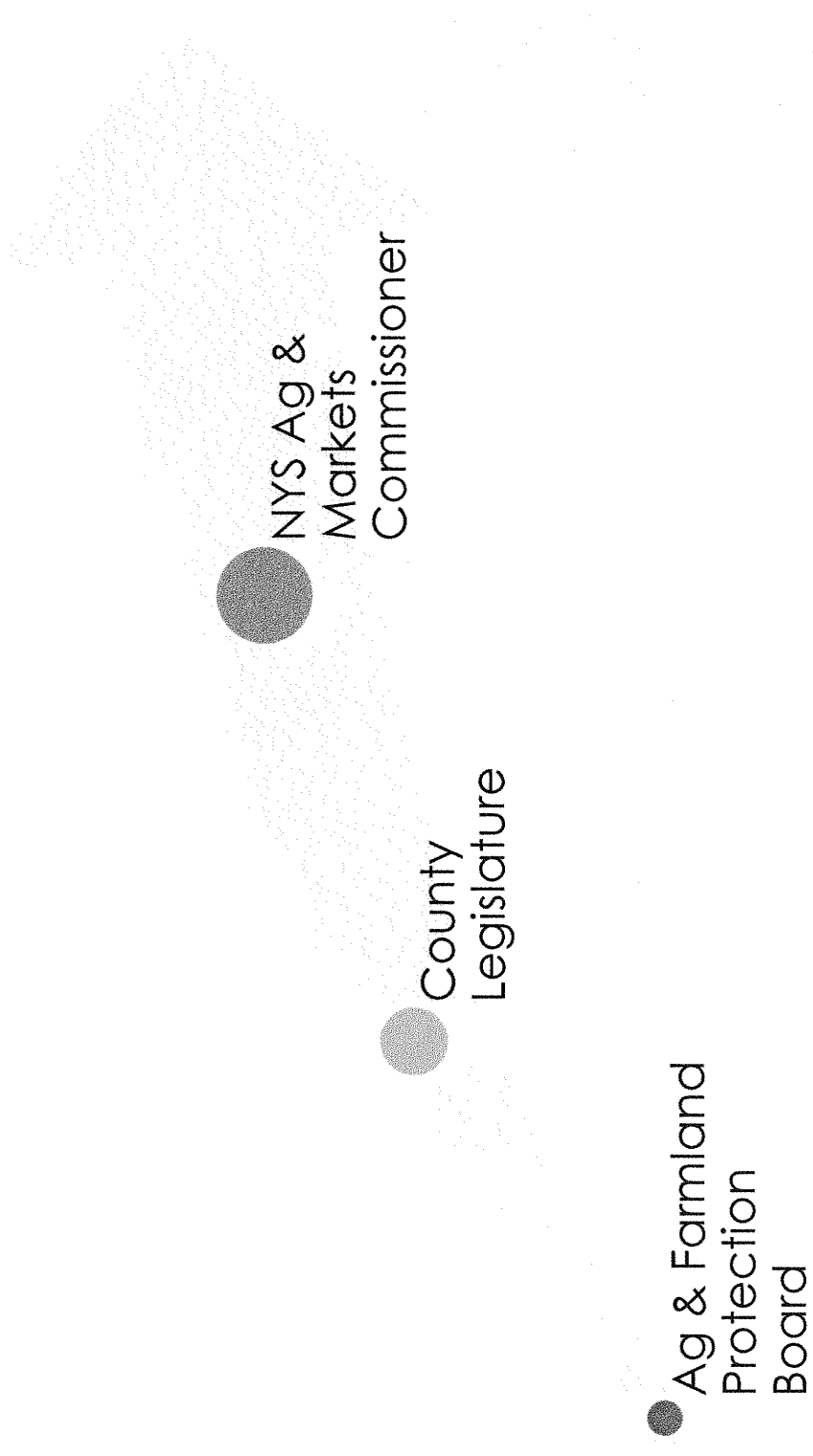
SULLIVAN COUNTY AG DISTRICTS

- **TWO Agricultural Districts:** (AG District #1 & Ag District #4)
 - Ag District #1 updated in 2013 (next review date: 2021)
 - Ag District #4 updated in 2015 (next review date: 2023)
- **Ag District #1:** Towns of Bethel, Callicoon, Cochecton, Delaware, Fremont, Liberty, Tusten, Thompson
- **Ag District #4:** Bethel, Fallsburg, Forestburgh, Highland, Liberty, Mamakating, Neversink, Rockland, Thompson
- **Approximately 160,000 acres**

SULLIVAN COUNTY AG DISTRICTS



THE PROCESS FOR THE 30 DAY WINDOW

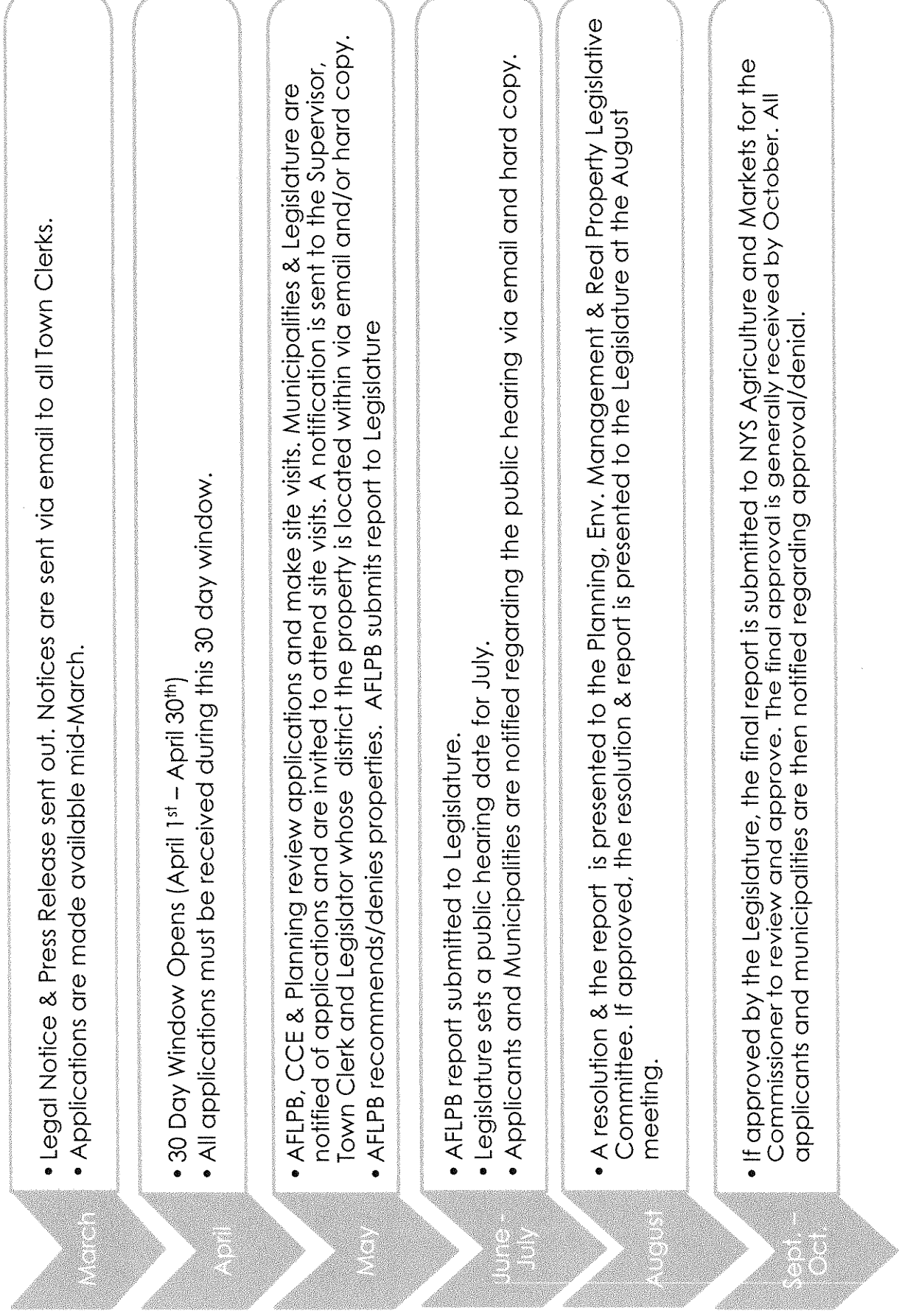


● Ag & Farmland
Protection
Board

● County
Legislature

● NYS Ag &
Markets
Commissioner

AGRICULTURE DISTRICT 30 DAY WINDOW TIMELINE



REVIEW & GUIDELINES

- **Review of local laws by NYS Ag & Markets**
 - **Farmers**
 - **Municipalities**
- **Guidelines for Review**
 - *Is the public health of safety threatened?*
 - *Does the local law or ordinance unreasonably restrict or regulate?*
 - *Does the regulated activity encompass farm operations?*
 - *Is the practice legal?*
- **NYSAM Guidance**
 - *Sample Ag Site Plan Review*
 - *Sample Guidance Documents*

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

QUESTIONS?