

## MINUTES

### GENESEE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

Monday, March 22, 2021

A meeting of the Genesee County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board was held on Monday, March 22, 2019 at 7:00 P.M. via Zoom Cloud Meetings.

Members in attendance: Donn Branton, LuAnn McKenzie, Jan Beglinger, Steven Boldt, Christina Yunker, Dennis Phelps, Kevin Andrews, and Felipe Oltramari. Staff present were: Erin Pence and Tim Welch from Soil and Water.

**Donn Branton called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.**

#### Approval of Minutes

**A motion to approve the meeting minutes from November 21, 2019 was made by LuAnne McKenzie, seconded by Jan Beglinger, and carried unanimously.**

#### Eight Year Review of Agricultural District No. 4

Erin Pence presented the report for the eight year review of Agricultural District No. 4, located in the Towns of Byron, Bergen, Elba, Stafford, and LeRoy. As of the completion of the review, the District encompasses 1,157 parcels totaling 32,330.2 acres. Erin Pence displayed an interactive map of the district and explained that this was the first Ag. District review that provided an online form option. The 2021 worksheet return rate was lower than the 2013 return rate, though the returned 2021 worksheets and online form submissions accounted for 59.7% of the parcels and 69.9% of the acreage. This was also the second review where owners of single residential parcels of less than 2.5 acres in area were targeted with letters that informed them that their property would be automatically un-enrolled from the Ag District if a response was not received. 240 parcels and 288.25 acres were removed due to no response being received, and these modifications account for a net loss of 276.51 acres from the District or a change of 0.9%. Dennis Phelps asked a question about solar farms on agricultural district land, and Felipe Oltramari answered that the agricultural district gives the right-to-farm protections from the State, but there is no penalty if your land is not being farmed while still within the Agricultural District. However, the building of solar farms does count as a conversion of farmland for the purposes of the special agricultural tax assessment, and there may be a penalty levied in that case. Kevin Andrews spoke to that and in the case of the Byron project, the solar developer is going to pay the conversion penalty.

**A motion was made by Christian Yunker to accept the Agricultural District No. 4 Report as presented and recommend the District be renewed for an another eight-year term with the proposed modifications. The motion was seconded by LuAnne McKenzie and carried unanimously.**

### **Agricultural District No. 1 Annual Enrollment Application**

Erin Pence presented the request for inclusion into Agricultural District No. 1 received during the Annual Enrollment period as shown below:

Requests for Inclusion into Agricultural District No. 1

Application Received: 3/04/2021

Tax Map Parcel #: 4.-1-53.2

Town: Alexander

Acres: 6.7

Owner(s): Thomas Vandebosch and Annette (Meyers) Vandebosch

Current Land Use: Residential & Agricultural

Approx. Prime Farmland Soils Composition: 16.1%

Contiguous to Main Farm Operation? No

Erin Pence mentioned that the owners explained that the parcel has been contiguously farmed with surrounding parcels since 1985, mostly with livestock feed but some fruit and vegetable crops. The owners also confirmed that the parcel does have drainage installed.

**A motion was made by Steve Boldt to recommend to the County Legislature that they approve the request for the inclusion into Agricultural District No. 1. The motion was seconded by Jan Beglinger and carried unanimously.**

### **Agricultural District No. 3 Annual Enrollment Application+**

Erin Pence presented the request for inclusion into Agricultural District No. 3 received during the Annual Enrollment period as shown below:

Requests for Inclusion into Agricultural District No. 3

Application Received: 1/29/2021

Tax Map Parcel #: 26.-1-60

Town: LeRoy

Acres: 2.047

Owner(s): James D. Barsaloux IV

Current Land Use:

Approx. Prime Farmland Soils Composition: 80.1%

Contiguous to Main Farm Operation? No

Erin Pence explained that the main use of the parcel is a farm stand, but the owners also communicated that they were going to use parts of the property to grow produce and fruit for the farm stand.

**A motion was made by Christian Yunker to recommend to the County Legislature that they approve the request for the inclusion into Agricultural District No. 3. The motion was seconded by LuAnne McKenzie and carried unanimously.**

## **Other Business**

Donn Branton discussed some of the issues with incoming solar projects on agricultural land, including land that he had been renting and farming for decades that is now going to be converted to solar energy production. Christian Yunker commented about how Livingston County does a good job of attracting development rights dollars, but that Genesee County does not get many. Felipe Oltramari replied to this with the explanation that land trusts organizations have not taken much of an interest in Genesee County.

**A motion was made to adjourn by LuAnne McKenzie, seconded by Felipe Oltramari and carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.**