

Town of Salem Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan
Steering Committee Meeting

MINUTES

Monday, December 8, 7:00 – 8:30 pm
Salem Town Office
214 Main Street

Present: Liz Brock, Chuck Alexander, Steve Alexander, Joseph Childs

Steering Committee for the plan

Chuck was the only member of the steering committee present at the meeting. Phil Lewis had emailed Liz and indicated he would not be able to attend. However, no one else wrote or called to indicate they would not be able to come to the meeting. Liz indicated that in the future she would send out meeting announcements a week ahead of time and ask for RSVPs. She will also work with Dottie to make phone calls to steering committee members to confirm their involvement and determine if another day or time would be more conducive to meeting.

Discussion of definition of “agriculture and farmland protection”

Chuck asked that we talk about this despite the small group size as he struggles with defining this concept to people. Liz said that in the eyes of American Farmland Trust, farmland protection means protecting the land use of agriculture, while supporting the business of agriculture. It’s two sides of one coin – you can’t have farms without quality farmland, and quality farmland won’t be farmed with out dedicated people and viable businesses. However, she also indicated that the definition of “protection” would be determined by the steering committee over the course of the plan to best fit the needs of the Town of Salem. This concept will continue to be discussed during future meetings.

Interview list and outreach strategy

Liz will conduct a series of 10 interviews with farmers, agribusinesses, landowners and others involved in agriculture. Chuck and Steve brainstormed a potential list of interview candidates that Liz compiled and will distribute to the committee via email for comment and prioritization. It was decided that an introduction letter should go out to interview candidates prior to a phone call from Liz to set up the interview. Liz will talk to Cooperative Extension to get this letter out. This will allow more education about the plan and the process to be disseminated into the community, while also introducing Liz. Upon receipt of feedback from the committee on interview candidates, Liz will begin this outreach.

Discuss mapping and inventory of farms in town

Liz said she would like to have maps pulled together prior to the meeting in January for discussion purposes. She will be working with Chris DeBolt from County Planning to create these maps. The following features will be included on the maps:

- Agricultural Districts
- Assessor Codes for land use
- Prime and Statewide Important Soils

- Land use/Land cover data (only if it's helpful)
- Protected land in town
- Classified wetlands
- Aquifers

In addition to the map work, Liz mentioned several sources of information to get at information on current farm operations in town. The new Agricultural Census data will be out in February and can be searched on a zip code basis. Chuck's master list of those involved in agriculture will also prove a useful resource in identifying the snap shot of agriculture in Salem at this time.

Action Items:

- ✓ AFT/Dottie to contact committee members prior to next meeting to confirm their participation
- ✓ AFT to draft list of interview candidates and introduction letter to be sent by Cornell Cooperative Extension; distribute to committee for comment
- ✓ AFT to begin outreach to interviewees
- ✓ AFT to work with County Planning to begin mapping work

Next Meeting: January 12, 2008, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

- ✓ Discuss progress on interviews, or summary if they are complete
- ✓ Discuss maps of agricultural land
- ✓ Discuss benefits provided by farms to town/village

Please RSVP attendance for next meeting.