

***Town of Salem Agriculture and Farm Viability Plan***  
**Steering Committee Meeting**

**MINUTES**

**Monday, May 11, 7:00 – 8:30 pm**  
**Salem Town Office**  
**214 Main Street**

**Attending:** Chuck Alexander, Steve Alexander, Bruce Ferguson, Nancy Hand Higby, Brigid Nosal, Dottie Schneider, Liz Brock.

**Recap of public meeting**

Committee thought there was good feedback from the public meeting. Was commonly thought that there was good farmer representation and that the draft goals were well received. Discussed that at the third public meeting, we should present maps first for people to correct and also provide smaller copies to key farmer representatives ahead of time for them to review on their own. Should also present draft recommendations at this third public meeting – likely in September. Suggestion was made to talk to Scott Fitscher at the County FSA office to see if he can help identify agricultural parcels. Liz will follow up.

**Review Goals**

Liz provided suggested language change for goal A, however upon further discussion of tools, the committee decided it would make sense to broaden this goal to be more general about providing education to the community and landowners about agriculture. Liz will draft new goal language for this and provide at the next meeting for feedback.

The last goal was edited to include... “on agricultural viability” at the end of it.

- a. Help the Town become a source of information about agriculture for the community. (Liz to edit)
- b. Seek ways to maintain and expand agricultural infrastructure to support viability of farms in Salem and beyond.
- c. Promote the benefits that agriculture provides to the community.
- d. Prepare to address the impacts of new development on agricultural viability.

**Recommendations to achieve goals**

Liz shared language from the Washington County Economic Development Strategic Plan to help explain the process of goal setting and writing recommendations for the plan. They define it this way:

**Goal:** general statement of a future condition which is considered desirable for the community; an end towards which the strategy/recommendation is aimed.

**Strategy/Recommendation:** An activity to be accomplished in pursuit of the goal – a specific aspiration which is reasonably attainable.

**Action:** specific step reasonably implemented as part of steps in pursuit of strategy/recommendation – your “to-do” list to come of this plan.

The public comment helped draft the goals – the missions that this plan needs to accomplish. The strategies will outline how to achieve them and the action steps will identify what needs be done in order to accomplish the strategies.

The committee talked at length about possible tools for the first two goals. They also identified any activities already taking place that would advance the first two goals along with the primary contact people behind each. A similar discussion around the second two goals will be conducted at the June meeting. Instead of describing this conversation in full, Liz will provide a complete draft of the strategies/actions in August for review by the committee.

Nancy Higby did mention that the plan should at a minimum recognize the significant natural resources upon which agriculture depends in Salem – namely the soil and water resources. She indicated that she's not certain how to address these issues or whether the community is interested in tools to "protect" them, but there should at least be recognition of them. Liz will talk to Scott Fitcher and Chris DeBolt about quantifying these resources in some manner for the introduction to the plan.

#### **Reschedule June/July meetings**

June meeting rescheduled for June 29, from 7:00 – 9:00 pm at the Town Office.

July meeting cancelled.

August meeting back on regularly scheduled 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month – August 10, 7:00 – 9:00.

#### **Next Meeting Date:**

June 29, 2009

7:00 – 9:00 pm Salem Town Office.

#### **Action Items:**

- ✓ **AFT** to talk to Scott Fitcher at County NRCS office about mapping/farm ID
- ✓ **AFT** to edit goal A to broaden to include education in general.
- ✓ **AFT** to contact Bill Tabor at Battenkill Rail to discuss status of rail renovations
- ✓ **AFT** to contact Rob Scheffer at Cargill on their future in Salem
- ✓ **AFT** to contact Paula Schafer about other possible ag economic development work the Town could do.
- ✓ **AFT** to contact Scott Fitcher and Chris DeBolt on quantifying soil/water resources.