

Town of Salem Agriculture and Farm Viability Plan
Steering Committee Meeting

MINUTES

Monday, April 13, 7:00 – 9:00 pm
Salem Town Office
214 Main Street

Stakeholder Interviews

The formal interviews are now complete at 12, though Liz will still try to connect with Underwood Greenhouse and Cargill. Liz provided a draft interview summary for review by committee member's. Feedback on this draft should be provided to Liz via email or at the next committee meeting. It will be emailed to all committee members as well – though NOT posted on the website as it is still in draft form.

Stakeholder Public Meeting

Our second public meeting will be held on ***Tuesday, April 28 at 7:00 pm*** at the Courthouse. A draft agenda was distributed for review and includes a discussion on draft goals as developed by the committee and review of the existing land use map as provided by Chris DeBolt. We will break into small groups to review the maps and hopefully get additional corrections on these for our final map. Liz explained that once we have a final land use map, we could pull some statistical information from it that will be helpful to the planning process.

Liz also provided a draft press release for the meeting. Steve Alexander said he would get it in the Eagle this week for a two-week run. Dottie said she would look into placing it in the Post Star as well and post in town in local businesses. Nancy suggested trying to get an interview with a reporter to get an article in the paper about the plan prior to the meeting. Dottie will look into this. Herb suggested some changes to the text of the press release to de-emphasize the use of the word "Plan". Liz will make the changes and send the revised document to Dottie and Steve on Tuesday, April 14. Liz will send to Eileen to have it posted on the town website as well.

Goal Development and Potential Tools

Liz and David Haight led a conversation regarding goals for the Farm Viability plan. Liz synthesized comments from the committee, from the interviews and from the first public meeting to come up with four draft conceptual goals and presented this to the committee. The committee provided feedback on these concepts and helped draft goals in full sentences. These draft goals will be presented at the stakeholder meeting for public input on the concepts and tools they would like to see employed to achieve each. They include the following in no particular order of preference or importance. The follow-up bullets are meant to further explain the purpose of the goal and will be fleshed out in future committee and public meetings.

- A. Help the Town become a source of information about agriculture for the community.
 - Audiences for this information could include: new landowners, farmers, and the non-farm public.
 - Collaboration with other organizations to provide available information and resources could include: Cornell Cooperative Extension, SWCD, Planning Board, Department of Agriculture and Markets

- Information could be provided on: available ag programs (ag districts and tax abatement resources), land rental opportunities, grants, importance of agriculture to the community, opportunities to “buy local”, process outlines for such things as building permits and subdivisions.
- B. Seek ways to maintain and expand agricultural infrastructure to support viability of farms in Salem and beyond.
- Existing infrastructure can be thought of as county/regional economic assets. Farms are more viable while these businesses are located here. While many tools to maintain these assets are beyond the scope of the Town, the Town could play an important role of champion for them.
 - Could consider using traditional economic development tools to attract new agricultural infrastructure businesses to the community.
- C. Promote the benefits that agriculture provides to the community.
- Increase awareness of the diversity of agriculture
 - Link with County resources and organizations to create and release information including; Cornell Cooperative Extension, Chamber of Commerce, etc.
 - Promote opportunities through traditional tourism to promote and advertise farms.
- D. Prepare to address the impacts of new development.
- Change is coming at some point to Salem. How do we prepare for it ahead of time while helping farmer stay in business?
 - Plan can outline strategies that can be taken if and when they become necessary to combat the impacts of new residential or commercial development on commercial agriculture.

These draft goals will be further refined at the May meeting after getting input from the community. Please come to that meeting with suggestions or concerns for discussion.

Next Meeting Date:

May 11, 7:00 – 9:00 pm Town Offices

Will need to reschedule June meeting. Please come with your calendars.

Action Items:

- ✓ **AFT** to provide revised press release to Dottie and Steve on Tuesday
- ✓ **Dottie and Steve** to get press release out to local papers and posted in local stores
- ✓ **Eileen** to have press release posted on Town website
- ✓ **Dottie** to have public meeting date posted on Courthouse website
- ✓ **AFT** to mail letter to interviewees to inform them of the public meeting April 28
- ✓ **AFT** to email draft interview summary to committee with minutes
- ✓ **AFT** to contact Chris DeBolt to see about copies of the maps for the meeting