



Oswego County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

Chairman

*Hon. Terry Wilbur
Hannibal*

Board of Directors

*John Adsit
Central Square*

*Tom Bonoffski
Pulaski*

*Barbara Brown
Pennellville*

*Barb Miano
Oswego*

*Craig Gfeller
Oswego*

*Dan Mandigo
Pulaski*

*Paul A. Forestiere II
Executive Director,
Cornell Cooperative
Extension*

Ex-Officio

*Jeff Richards, Chair
Oswego County Soil
& Water*

*David Turner
Oswego County
Planning Director*

*Betsy Knapp
Real Property & Tax*

Minutes of Oswego County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board Meeting March 4, 2021, Legislative Chambers/via Zoom

Present (In Person) Terry Wilbur, John Adsit, Tom Bonoffski, Barbara Brown, Mary Ellen “Mel” Chesbro, Craig Gfeller, Jeff Richards, Paul A. Forestiere II, Betsy Knapp, David Turner.
(Via Zoom Conference Call): Joe Chairvolotti, Erich Keena, Joshua Vrooman

Excused: Barb Miano

Absent: Dan Mandigo

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 11:19 A.M.

New Business: Nomination of New Chair – Chair Terry Wilbur talked about the importance of the Farmland Protection Board and of Ag Districting. He also spoke on why he cannot continue to be Chair of the Farmland Protection Board as a new job opportunity prevents him from serving in such a capacity. Paul Forestiere commented on how important it is to have a Chair that is an Oswego County Legislator and is part of the tradition of local Farmland Protection Board. Chair Wilbur opened nominations for Chair of the Farmland Protection Board. Barb Brown nominated Mary Ellen Chesbro, seconded by John Adsit, motion carried with no opposition. Terry Wilbur officially left the meeting and Chair Chesbro assumed leadership stating she along with her husband are farmers and she served as the Ag Manager for the NYS Fair. She was also a Science teacher earlier in life before farming.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes of February 20, 2020 were reviewed. Motion made by Barb Brown to accept the minutes, seconded by Tom Bonoffski. Carried with no opposition.

The following applications were reviewed for inclusion in the Agriculture District:

1. Fred Allen, Town of Schroepel: Motion made by Barb Brown, seconded Tom Bonoffski to include 135.57 acres in the Agriculture District. Motion carried, no opposition.
2. Richard Brown, Town of West Monroe: Motion made by Tom Bonoffski, seconded by Craig Gfeller to include 36 acres in the Agriculture District. Motion carried, no opposition.
3. Charles Butler, Town of Oswego: Motion made by Barb Brown to accept the first two parcels and deny the third. A letter regarding the rejection, due to Charles Butler not owning the property, will be sent with request to reapply next year for that particular parcel. Craig asked about the land use and it being a horse farm. Paul gave a review regarding Ag District renewals being every eight years. Chair Chesbro indicated the original motion by Barb Brown is inaccurate as there are only two parcels, not three. The Board desires to accept the first parcel (11.18 acres) and reject the second parcel (4.4 acres). Motion made by Barb Brown to amend the motion to include 11.18 acres in the Agriculture District, seconded by John Adsit, carried with no opposition.
4. Cianfarano/Bishop, Town of Phoenix: Motion made by Barb Brown, seconded by Tom Bonoffski to include 2.13 acres and 69.52 acres in the Agriculture District. Motion carried, no opposition.
5. Kyle Clark, Town of Central Square: Motion made by John Adsit, seconded by Barb Brown to include 57.79 acres, 47.4 acres, and 15.54 acres in the Agriculture District. Motion carried, no opposition.
6. Roger Clark, Town of Orwell: Motion made by Barb Brown, seconded by Tom Bonoffski to include 20.85 acres in the Agriculture District. Motion carried, no opposition.
7. Cooper Fowler, Town of New Haven: Motion made by Craig Gfeller, seconded by Barb Brown to include 77.64 acres in the Agriculture District. Motion carried, no opposition.
8. Timothy and Rebecca Fowler, Town of Hannibal: Motion made by Craig Gfeller, seconded by Barb Brown to include 3.11 acres, 11.88 acres, and 52.64 acres in the Agriculture District. Motion carried, no opposition.
9. Nicole Ginsburg, Town of Palermo: Motion made by Tom Bonoffski, seconded by Craig Gfeller to include 20.44 acres, 12 acres, and 1.1 acres in the Agriculture District. Motion carried, no opposition.
10. Mark Raymond, Town of Palermo: Motion made by Barb Brown, seconded by John Adsit to include 90.55 acres in the Agriculture District. Motion carried, no opposition.
11. Jason Stokes, Town of Hannibal: Motion made by Craig Gfeller, second by Tom Bonoffski to include 44.95 acres in the Agriculture District. Motion carried, no opposition.

Other Business: Paul discussed an upcoming solar power workshop to be held by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oswego County that was cancelled due to COVID. The first workshop held years ago was very successful. There are challenges of doing workshops through Zoom and some guest speakers do not like to do a workshop by Zoom or to be recorded. Barb Brown talked about issues regarding solar and recycling when a solar farm needs to be taken down. Chair Chesbro said legislators are looking into issues of closures and recycling of the material. David Turner reported his staff have been directed to prepare a solar land-use document for Oswego County towns and villages using NYS regulation language. He stated that they cannot make municipalities adopt these regulations. Some municipalities have a moratorium on solar power in place. Paul asked David if he could get a copy of the document they are working on. Craig Gfeller asked if any projects were coming to fruition, stating in some cases he has seen they did not due to National Grid not upgrading electricity grid. Tom Bonffski said the Cranberry Farm received a letter last year from a commercial solar developer who came to visit the farm, was ready to do the contract, but the power line would not allow it.

David Turner said in other counties it has been shown more agricultural benefits to farms such as sheep grazing and how that is often times cheaper than hiring a company to mow the property. Paul said it is like bee companies bringing bees in for a period of time and that sheep grazing is similar.

Paul Forestiere asked if anyone on Zoom had a question. Joe Chairvolotie attempted to ask a question, however the audio did not pick up.

There being no further business, motion made by Barb Brown to adjourn, seconded by Craig Gfeller at 12:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Josh Vrooman
Ag Community Educator
CCE of Oswego County