



# Onondaga County Legislature

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Chairman

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## PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

### PROPOSED INCLUSION OF VIABLE AGRICULTURAL LANDS WITH CERTIFIED AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS PURSUANT TO SECTION 303-B OF THE NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS LAW June 4, 2019

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mr. May, Mr. Rowley, Mr. Burtis, Mrs. Tassone, Ms. Cody, Mrs. Abbott-Kenan, Mr. Buckel, Dr. Chase, Mr. Holmquist, Mr. McBride, Mr. Bush, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Bottrill, Ms. Williams, Mrs. Ervin, Mr. Knapp  
**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Ryan

Chairman Knapp called the 12:55 p.m. public hearing to order at 1:10 p.m. The Clerk read the notice of public hearing and stated the notice was duly published.

Chairman Knapp asked for speakers wishing to be heard.

**Diana Sleieron** – She thanked everyone for their time and stated that this is the first time she's ever applied for an agricultural district. Documents backing up her statement will be supplied (on file). The Ag and Farmland Protection Board brought several things to her attention, including the State Canal Trailway. The town and county are supposed to be responsible for the portion that goes through the Town of Elbridge, and that care has been declining. Right now the canal is about to flow over the road, the smell is horrific, and it is flooding her field. One comment was that there was no aerial visual showing crops being grown. The two items for harvesting are spearmint and garlic, which cannot grow in flooded areas. The aerial photo used is at least two years old and does not represent her current property. The Code Enforcement Officer for the Town of Elbridge said he had no idea there were agricultural animals on her property. She stated she has owned her goats for five years and has provided a veterinary record showing when she acquired the goats. There was a comment that the aerial photo does not show agricultural use for the goats. The goats do not eat clear cut grass, but require trees, because they are browsing animals. They would not be able to look at a field and determine if it was agriculturally being used for goats. She has provided information from the North Carolina State Extension explaining the proper care for those animals. In 2017, the SPCA responded to the town that the roosters and hens were perfectly being cared for. She finds it difficult that the town office would not know that she has agricultural animals, as they were provided that information. In 2015, she had a violation on her goat barn, and the Code Officer came out to her property to measure the goat barn. Included in her information is the letter from the officer. She purchased the property in 2004, and at the time, they had bees on the property. She has addressed the most significant issues within her packet of documents, and said she has no expectation that the Legislature will review the packet today and change their mind. She wanted to enter into the record that these things were there, and the legislature has the information necessary to review her property, so when she applies next year, there will not be any surprises. She stated that she has used the property agriculturally since 2005, including for hunting. The US Department of Agriculture does indicate that hunting is an agricultural use. There are goats, chickens and the apiaries that have been on the property forever. Frank Schepp, the previous owner, farmed the property for garlic, and she is trying to activate that again. She hopes the legislature will review and reconsider the board's decision.

There are agricultural districts all around her, so she is surprised that they indicated it should not be in the ag district. She thanked everyone for their time and consideration of this.

**Douglas Blumer** – The first hat he is wearing today is Town Councilor and Deputy Supervisor for the Town of Elbridge. He is requesting that the Legislature follow the recommendation of the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board and not include parcel 029-03-14.2 located at 980 Schaap Road in the Town of Elbridge. NYS Agricultural and Markets Law Section 303-B states that in order for a land to be added to a district the parcel has to be predominately viable agricultural land. The soil types and typography on this parcel are not very viable agricultural soils. Nor is there any significant agricultural improvements or resources, which includes timber or biomass. There is also no history of income from production agriculture on this parcel. The second hat he is wearing today is representing the agricultural community that depends on the rights and protections provided by a certified agricultural district. As a commercial agricultural producer, he is requesting that the legislature follow the recommendation by the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board. His livelihood depends on the rights and protections forwarded by this law. This is an out-of-state landowner trying to abuse the spirit and intentions of this law for protections for uses other than agriculture. There is no history of agricultural use on this property, nor are there any significant resources to support production agriculture. He strongly recommends it not be included in this agricultural district. Thank you.

Chairman Knapp asked if anyone else would like to be heard on this topic. Hearing none, Chairman Knapp closed the hearing at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



DEBORAH L. MATURO, Clerk  
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