

ONONDAGA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

407 Court House
Syracuse, NY 13202
Phone: 315/435-2070

DEBORAH MATURO
Clerk

BRIAN REEVES
Chairman

ROBERTA HARRISON
Coordinator

**Onondaga County Legislature
Public Hearing on Renewal of Agricultural District No. 4
In the Towns of DeWitt, Fabius, LaFayette, Pompey and Tully
Monday, August 25, 2008
LaFayette Town Hall, LaFayette, New York**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Harrison, Mr. Jordan, Chairman Rhinehart

ALSO PRESENT: *See attachment #1*

Call to Order and Opening Remarks - James Rhinehart, Onondaga County Legislature

Chairman Rhinehart called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. He explained the purpose of the hearing and welcomed those in attendance.

Reading of Hearing Notice -

The assistant clerk read the hearing notice

Summary of Agricultural Districts in New York State and Agricultural District Review Process in New York State and Onondaga Co - Roberta Harrison, Cornell Cooperative Extension (*see attachment #2*)

Summary of Correspondence:

- Public information meeting was held on March 24, 2008 at the Town of Fabius Town Hall
- Clerk of the Legislature mailed 2,345 letters to property owners with land in the Ag. District
- Approximately 200 phone calls were received requesting clarification of the Ag. District process
- 78 property owners requested 100 parcels totaling 1,187 acres of land be deleted from the district
- Several request by property owners to add land to the district.*

*Investigation of the public record found that land was already enrolled. Land remains enrolled in the district unless a property owner requests that the land be removed.

Importance of Soil Quality Related to Farm Business Viability Within Agricultural District No. 4 - Brian Hall, Planning Manager, Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District

Mr. Hall stated the following points:

- Northern portion of the district is located in the Oneida Lake Watershed, ultimately flows to Lake Ontario
- Southern portion is located in the Tioughnioga River Watershed, ultimately drains into Chesapeake Bay
- 8- 10 prime soils in this district *

*If you are interested in specific soils and or the soils on your property, stop by the Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District Office and they will assist you.

Review of Proposed Modifications Related to Agricultural District No. 4 Renewal and Findings of Environmental Review – Don Jordan, Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (*see attachment # 3*)

Summary of Findings of Onondaga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board and Recommendations for Agricultural District No. 4. – Roberta Harrison, Onondaga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (*see attachment #4*)

Comments by County Legislators – Robert DeMore, 12th District County Legislator

Mr. DeMore stated the Ag. District is very important to his district. He thanked everyone for all their hard work on this recertification.

Open Floor

Chairman Rhinehart welcomed those in attendance and asked if anyone would like to speak.

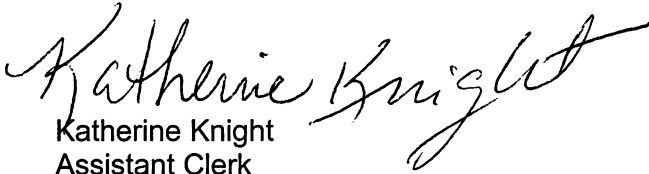
Cynthia Saunders-Cheuthan questioned the impact of removing her home from the district. Ms. Harrison stated as long as the property was not being farmed there would be no impact and taxes would remain the same. Mrs. Saunder-Cheuthan asked if she could plant a garden. Ms. Harrison stated she could as long as the town did not have a law against it. Mr. DeMore stated it would be fine to plant a garden, the town has no restriction.

Gilbert Zaborny asked how pesticides were controlled. Mr. Hall stated that farms are regulated by Department of Conservation. All pesticides and herbicides used by the farms must be applied by someone who has been certified. What they spray and at what rate is all bound by the DEC. The farms are required to report to the DEC all usage. The County Soil and Water Conservation District writes management plans for the farms in which they will address such things as pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. They can make recommendations to these farms. Ms. Harrison stated that most farmers are private applicators and certified however but private and commercial applicators must have continuing education each year to receive their certification. Mr. Zaborny stated he is concerned about a farm located at a higher elevation and the run off which could affect the water on his property. Ms. Harrison stated the chemicals are put together in a manner so that after they are applied they break down into normal everyday compounds that you interact with in your normal everyday life. Mr. Hall stated that most of them photo degrade within a short period of time.

Mr. Zaborny asked if you remove your property is it possible to revert back. Ms. Harrison replied yes, if you are starting a farm and or renting your land to be farmed. There are two ways to do this. Each year from January 1st – January 30th Ag. District Law allows landowners to petition to have their land put into an Ag. District The Farmland Protection Board would write a report, the County Legislature would hold a public hearing and the land would be put back into the Ag. District by the end of that year; or you could wait for the 8 year Ag. District Renewal Modification and add the land at that time.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Katherine Knight
Assistant Clerk