

Knox Agricultural Advisory Committee

Meeting of April 19th, 2022

Knox Town Hall

Summary

Present: Gary Kleppel, Evan Taylor

absent: Earl Barcomb, Jay Francis, Betty Ketchum, Ken Saddlemire, Brian Wilson

Old business

Traffic calming on farm roads – The committee members and other residents identified 10 farms on county roads, the locations of which are to be forwarded to the County GIS coordinator. Once mapped, the County DPW will begin installing farmer's at work signs.

The NY meat crisis – Improving access to processing plants – Gary Kleppel reported that Senator Hinchey's bill for support for livestock processing infrastructure had passed in the legislature and is included in the NY State budget. The program provides \$5 million in grants of \$50,000 each to improve processing plant infrastructure and help with USDA certification. Proudly, much of the language in the bill was taken directly from the notes provided by the Knox AAC when we met with the Senator and her staff. Additional legislation is in the works.

Attracting & keeping farmers in Knox - BKW Collaborations – Kleppel reported that he zoomed with the Principal Kane and Michaela Kerher of BKW High School. They created a list of speakers for the proposed Agri-business panel that contained speakers who the Knox AAC suggested and others who the BKW folks suggested. When the chair received a preliminary copy of the invitation to potential speakers, it was different from the list originally agreed upon. The chair said he did not object, but would let the BKW folks handle the event.

Change in the Abandonment Clause in the Knox Zoning ordinance - The committee discussed the changes proposed for the abandonment clause by the Planning Board. It was pointed out that the change in agricultural abandonment would result in abandonment of a farm in a non-ag district occurring after 3 years rather than 5. The members present concluded that this was not acceptable and they decided to develop an alternative along the lines that existing farms in non-ag districts are a permitted use (never considered abandoned; new farms would require site plan approval by the Planning Board). Alternatively, the committee felt that a generational basis for abandonment would be acceptable (i.e., after 25 years – one generation – of not being farmed the former farm would be considered abandoned. Tolerable would be to keep the current abandonment standard of 5 years. Changing farm abandonment from 5 to 3 years is unacceptable to the committee members who were present.

New business

There was no new business.