

Knox Agricultural Advisory Committee
Meeting of June 21st, 2022
Knox Town Hall

Summary

Convene at 7:00 PM.

Old business

Traffic calming on farm roads - It was recommended that County maps of farms in Knox be provided to AAC members, possibly via aerial photographs. It was suggested that FSA could provide data on where the active fields are in the town

Change in Knox zoning ordinance re: farm abandonment – The committee continued its discussions on farm abandonment in Residential districts pursuant to requests by the Planning Board (PB) to examine the issue. Members pointed out the complexity of determining how we know if a farm is being abandoned. It was suggested that a review might be undertaken, perhaps jointly by the PB and AAC, to determine whether abandonment is occurring. It was pointed out that certain farm-conservation programs (e.g., Conservation Reserve Program) require that agricultural land not be farmed for as much as 10 years.

The committee also discussed the PB-requested examination of ways to reduce conflict between farmers and non-farmers in both Agricultural and Residential districts. Committee members discuss the idea of livestock threshold in Residential districts, providing guidance using Animal Units to ascertain the number of animals a parcel can support. The committee also discussed the kinds of nuisances farms create. The Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) report will be discussed further in the coming months.

New Business

AAC and the Knox Memorial Day Parade - The chair raised the possibility that the AAC might be represented in the 2023 Memorial Day Parade to increase the visibility of the AAC and demonstrate the town's support for agriculture. It was suggested that the AAC partner with the FFA at Berne-Knox-Westerlo High School and the Albany County 4-H in this project.

Adjourn at 8:30 PM.

Request by Town Supervisor and Chair of the Planning Board

Article V L 2 says that in the Residential District actively farmed land where farming has ceased for more than 5 years shall constitute abandonment. This appears to be at odds with Section 42 General Uses for Agricultural in the Residential District. **The Ag Committee needs to take a look at this and suggest changes if needed.**

ARTICLE V: Section 51 L. Abandonment

1. When a non-conforming use has been abandoned, it shall not thereafter be re-established. Failure to use or occupy a non-conforming use for a period of one hundred eighty (180) days shall constitute abandonment.

2. In the particular case of farms located in residential districts, which are being actively farmed, cessation of farming for a period greater than five years shall constitute abandonment.

The agenda for next Thursdays meeting includes an item for proposed changes to the Zoning ordinance. We can discuss this to a greater or lesser extent depending on time. I just want to get the ball rolling. The proposed changes are below.

Article V Section L Abandonment

L 1 Increase the amount of time from 6 months to 3 years. There are a number of "legacy" businesses that are by now part of the Town. 6 months is not enough time to allow fore state transfer , sale, renovation etc. The Township Tavern is an example.

L 2 Drop this subsection. The current subsection requires that any lands in residential districts that were actively farmed in this district where farming has ceased for more than 5 years to be considered abandoned. This Section is not in keeping with the spirit and goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Section V Density Control Schedule. Reduce minimum living space for residences from 1000- square feet to 500 square. This change will enhance housing affordability and sustainability.

The use tables show the following:

Page 28: ARTICLE IV - **USE REGULATIONS and USE TABULATION** Section 40 - Permitted Uses

Symbols: P ... designates a use permitted by right.

C ... designates a temporary and/or conditional use contingent on securing a Special Use Permit in each case from the Zoning Board of Appeals (See Article V, Section 50D)

A ... designates a permitted use subject to site plan approval by the Planning Board in accordance with Article VI, Section 61F. ...

N ... not permitted.

Page 29: Section 42 - General Uses

Agricultural not including the keeping of fowl or farm animals (Article V, Section 50A10): **P for Residential district, P for Agricultural district**

Agricultural including the keeping of more than 15 fowl and more than 2 farm animals (Article V, Section 50A 9): **A for Residential district, P for Agricultural district**

From: tbwolfe1064@aol.com [<mailto:tbwolfe1064@aol.com>]

Sent: Friday, April 01, 2022 4:57 PM

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Cc: 'pam kleppel'; 'Molly Belmont'; 'Maggie Taylor'; 'Betty Ketcham'; 'Brian Wilson'; 'Earl Barcomb'; 'Evan Taylor'; 'Jay Francis'; 'Ken Saddlemire'; 'Russell Pokorny'; 'Russell Pokorny'

Subject: RE: Agricultural Districts Question

Gary. Agriculture is an allowed use in all of the Zoning classes in the Zoning Ordinance other than the Land Conservation district (Section 42)

Dropping Section 51 L 2 of the ZO eliminates the conflict within the ZO and between these two sections by removing Section 51 L 2's implication that farming/agriculture is a non conforming use in Residential districts.