

Knox Agricultural Advisory Committee  
Meeting of September 15, 2021  
Knox Town Hall

Summary

Present: Gary Kleppel, Joshua Rockwood, Ken Saddlemire, Brian Wilson Absent: Jay Francis

**Old business**

***Follow-on to the Farm Transition Workshop*** – The committee continued to discuss farm transition. The conversation turned to the question of attracting new farmers, particularly young farmers, and keeping the family farmers we have in Knox. Several ideas emerged:

- Have a farm tour aimed at young farmers (Chair will contact National Young Farmers Coalition),
- Create an apprenticeship program,
- Identify the demographics of agriculture in Knox,
- Talk to Tim Biello at AFT about using Farm Link to attract young farmers to Knox, BKW High School: Chair will contact the principal and FFA faculty advisor.

***Raising awareness of farming in Knox*** – The committee decided to request space in the town's newsletter to inform residents about the AAC and its activities, and to direct residents to the AAC page on the town's website. The committee also decided to compile a list of Knox's farms and farmers, along with their products for the AAC page on the Town's website, and to restore the list of farm products and services on its page. Councilman Saddlemire offered to find out if there is a

**New Business**

***Filling gap on the AAC*** – Member Joshua Rockwood will be resigning from the AAC. Along with, Jessica Gaige's resignation, we will now have two vacancies on the committee. Members are nominated Earl Barcomb and Evan Taylor to fill these gaps. Mr. Taylor accepted the nomination. Mr. Barcomb will be contacted. Nominee names will be presented to the Town Board by Councilman Saddlemire.

***Our new agenda –***

***Infrastructure*** - The committee discussed the infrastructure needs that would help improve safety for farm vehicles on roads (town, county and state) in town. Member Brian Wilson pointed out that the farmers enjoy the small, country roads of the town and would prefer not to see them altered by potentially un-necessary infrastructure. He suggested that most likely signage making drivers aware that they share the roadways with farm equipment and encouraging drivers to slow down and be courteous would help. Modifying signage at certain intersections may also be helpful. The chair asked members to send him suggestions of the locations where signs are needed and the kinds of signs that would be most useful. Once the list is formalized by the AAC, it will be presented to the Town Board (or county/state) for further attention.

In addition, committee members pointed out that power lines extending from poles on the road to farm buildings and residences are often very low and may present a danger to farmers, especially when using heavy equipment. The chair will contact National Grid to request assistance with this issue and, in addition, to point out that power has been lost at critical times of the day, for no apparent reason. This has resulted in loss of product (e.g., fluid milk) and other problems.

State Meat Inspection – The chair will contact Senator Hinchey’s office to set up a meeting to discuss the difficulties associated with livestock processing, including access to USDA inspected packing facilities, the potential to restore the NY State Inspection system, and the security of the food supply chain, especially during emergencies (e.g., pandemics).

Certified Kitchen – The committee discussed the possibility of creating a certified kitchen for value-added production. Possible locations (that may already have certified cooking facilities include Rock Road Chapel and the Knox Fire Hall

Developing Closer Ties with Farmers in Berne – Knox and Berne both have small but active farming communities. It was decided that the AAC would explore possible collaborations with the Town of Berne on agricultural issues.