

Knox Agricultural Advisory Committee
Meeting of August 21st, 2019
Knox Town Hall

Summary

Members present: Jay Francis, Gary Kleppel; Joshua Rockwood, Ken Saddlemire, Brian Wilson
Members absent: Jessica Gaige, Betty Ketcham

7:00 Convene

Old business

Farm Day

Update – Amy Pokorny

Review working draft of ppt – Gary Kleppel

Hog and Swine Farm Zoning

Upcoming hearing on amending the ordinance

Special Use Permits

Gary Kleppel & Ken Saddlemire

Farm Transition - Update

Gary Kleppel & Ken Saddlemire

New business

Knox Farming BMPs – Let's get
out in front of the issue
Gary Kleppel

Discussion & Comments

9:00 Adjourn

Old business

Farm Day – Gary Kleppel showed the first draft of the slide show about farming in Knox that the AAC is preparing for Family Farm Day. Some family and other photos, as well as audio-video coordination were still needed. Kleppel explained that the finished product would be ready for the event, but that a computer not yet been obtained to show the presentation. Kleppel said he would check with Amy Pokorny and cooperative extension to see if they had equipment that we can borrow.

Hog and Swine Farm Zoning – Upcoming hearing on amending the ordinance – The committee spent considerable time discussing the proposed amendment to the Town of Knox zoning ordinance to allow hog farming. Members examined all aspects of the ordinance that involved farming and concluded that the simplest and most straight forward position to take was to strike any mention of hog and swine farming and just say that hog/swine farming is no different than farming of any other kind of livestock. It was pointed out that with proper management livestock does not create a nuisance. Ken Saddlemire pointed out that at the last town board meeting residents who were concerned expressed most of their concern about impacts on water quality and whether there should be limits on the numbers of animals permitted. AAC members pointed out that people have been farming in Knox for a very long time and had not impacted water quality, even over Karst geology. They also pointed out that management, not numbers determines whether or not livestock create nuisances. People currently raising swine were encouraged to seek a special use permit from the ZBA pending resolution of the issue (hopefully zoning ordinance amendment) by the Town Board.

Farm Transition – Part 1 of the Farm Transition Project is set for November. Currently, American Farmland Trust (Hudson Valley Farm Link and Legacy Programs) and CCE are on board. Joshua Rockwood agreed to sit down with Sandy Gordon for an interview to describe the process they used to transition Gordon Farmz to West Wind Acres. Still need to contact Farm Bureau, NYS Farmland Protection Program, and National Young Farmers Coalition. Currently, two attorneys and two financial planners have signed up for Part 2 (meetings of individual farmers and advisors) in March. We need to start getting the word out.

New business

Knox Farming Best Management Practices (BMPs) – Gary Kleppel suggested that the AAC might want to create BMPs to show the community that farmers are concerned about the environment and being good citizens. Ken Saddlemire pointed out that there are already numerous regulatory agencies and programs that create/require stewardship and attentive management of land, water and air quality. Bryan Wilson agreed that the committee should support existing good agricultural practices and not create yet another layer of regulatory complexity. The majority of committee members agreed and the suggestion was taken off the table.