

# **Agriculture and Open Space Advisory Committee**

## **Minutes of the June 30, 2008 Meeting**

Submitted by Robert McKeon

In attendance: Richard Biezynski, Ken Migliorelli, Robert McKeon, Mary Ann Johnson, Beth Mead, Micki Strawinski

Absent: Clerk Elizabeth Wilkins, Pete Hubbell, Miriam Latzer, Craig Vogel

The meeting convened at 6:10pm

### **Crop and Ag Business Reports**

Richie, Kenny and Beth gave a report on weather and market issues affecting agricultural business in the town, region and elsewhere. Recent food security concerns appear to continue to fuel the buy local effort, increasing the market for vegetable growers.. Animal production costs continue to climb and a discussion ensued on where those additional expenses could be passed on and would be difficult. Restaurant businesses seem to be strong, as well as local and regional markets; while stores are buying less. The frost in May and hail storm in June has damaged a significant portion of some Columbia County farms and to a lesser extent a small portion of Northern Dutchess operations. This should further limit supply levels and increase the market for local growers.

Robert and Mary Ann reported on their meeting at which the county's new initiative Dutchess County Bounty was announced. It is a project to unite growers and restaurants; supplying them with the information they need to work together, such as products, schedules and menu items. This is modeled after the successful Columbia County Bounty program; and is being coordinated through the Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation with assistance of the Northern Dutchess Alliance. Once the information is gathered and the brochure is developed; there will be an event to kick off the initiative.

Farmland Preservation Projects - The West Kerley Corners Road farmland protection projects have begun in earnest as most of the landowners have submitted their applications to the Town Clerk. The various funding partners have been gathered to discuss potential interest in partnering with the Town in moving this initiative forward with the least possible impact to the taxpayer. A meeting of the landowners to answer any questions that they may have is going to be scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> week in July.

The Committee discussed the status of the Centers and Greenspace Plan and the task force's meetings that transpired with landowners in the proposed Ag Business District. A brief update of the Keep Farming project was given by Mary Ann. The committee reviewed a planning board referral for the Hammerling property.

The meeting concluded at 7:25pm.