

**Minutes for the Ag & Open Space Advisory Committee
September 29, 2008**

Present: Craig Vogel, Rich Biezynski, Mary Ann Johnson, Pete Hubbell, Miriam latzer, Larry Thetford, Beth Mead, Robert McKeon, Elizabeth Wilkins, Ken Migliorelli

Agenda

I. Crop and Ag Business Reports

Rich reported that sales of chickens are slowing. Business at farm markets are steady for vegetable producers, but not necessarily a money maker for some of the livestock farmers. Sales to upper end restaurants may be slowing somewhat. Rhinebeck is thinking of eliminating the additional market day due to insufficient activity.

Ken reported increased activity at the stand in town. Wholesale accounts in Albany are off this year and some roadside stands were also a little down in traffic. Farmer's markets are strong, were stronger for him - probably up 10-20%. Ken pointed out that expenses have risen significantly and the bottom line may be negatively effected when all is said and done. He gave as an example the 80% increase in the cost of fertilizer than last year. Fuel bills have nearly doubled. Gross is up, but costs are skyrocketing.

Winter Market

Miriam is going to start working on the market in October. Laura Pensiero said she would underwrite the advertising. Robert suggested that perhaps the village's events committee could help with the advertising.

Farmland Preservation Projects

Mead and Wil-Hi are hoping to close early next year. There are some hindrances to the progression of the projects.

West Kerley Corners

Robert spoke with Scenic Hudson and the county as to how to proceed with these projects. The committee discussed the reality that a county application for Bulkeley may take more time than what is available for this effort. Scenic Hudson is exploring how it may assist with the timeframe. The committee discussed the possibility of a three-way partnership with the county, Scenic Hudson and the Town. It was decided to explore this avenue.

Community Preservation Update

Pete and Rich report that the meetings are beginning and they are discussing how best to proceed in identifying Preservation Plan projects.