



# Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

February 16, 2017 - Henrietta Town Hall

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

## Attendees

- **Advisory Committee Members:** Ann Stevens, Bruce Howlett, Greg Hartt, Steve VanVoorhis, John Barker, Charlie Remelt, Marie Krenzer, John Matthews, Nathan Gabbert
- **Town of Henrietta:** Peter Minotti (Dep Supervisor), Chris Martin, (Engineer)
- **Consultants/Support:** Sheila Hess (CC Environment & Planning)
- **Residents/Interested Citizens:** (sign in sheet provided to town and consultant)

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1. The purpose of the Henrietta Ag & Farmland Protection Planning Advisory Committee Meeting was to review comments from kick-off meeting in January, introduce a draft plan outline and resource maps, engage in a visioning exercise describing current and future states of agriculture in the Town, review potential topics for farmer survey and finalize a stakeholder list. The meeting was advertised and open to the public. Nine people were in the audience and were invited to ask questions and leave comments after the meeting.
2. Sheila Hess, CC Environment & Planning provided an overview of the draft plan outline and resource maps, led a visioning exercise and discussion regarding topics for a farmer survey and reviewed specific stakeholders to be contacted during the planning process.
3. Next steps: Planning team will coordinate a workshop meeting to be held on **March 23, 2017** from 5pm until 8pm, during which inventory data will be reviewed followed by a SWOT analysis and round table discussions facilitated by planning consultants.
4. The following pages provide bulleted items that capture comments, ideas, suggestions and action items that were discussed during the meeting.





**MEETING COMMENTS/IDEAS/ACTION ITEMS**

1. Planning process should capture the location of farmers' home base. Is it in Henrietta or elsewhere?
2. Vision, Current/Future States Discussion:
  - a. Ag has historical value – old farmsteads still here, preservation of old farmsteads
  - b. Ag is a resource that is harvested, working lands - productive, produces something
  - c. Town supports overall health of the agricultural entity in addition to the land itself
  - d. Town supports ag as a business
  - e. Farmland will not exist if farms are not viable or profitable
  - f. Farming is a business that drives economy in the Town
  - g. Agriculture is evolving, changing, face of ag will change
  - h. Plan needs flexibility to allow existing farms to adapt and change
  - i. Farmland in Henrietta is uniquely positioned close to population center providing an important opportunity to local markets
  - j. Broad sense of what agriculture is – anything grown and harvested – look outside box. Needs to be flexible and adaptive
  - k. Agricultural land base will continue to shrink – won't expand, need adequate drainage
  - l. Farmland areas are rural, lack of street lights, stars, wildlife habitat
  - m. Visual appeal, open, not cluttered, no sprawling commercial development
  - n. Cultural and emotional attachment to land in general, farmland especially
  - o. Generational disconnect with farming, younger generation not interested
  - p. Local market opportunities are positive – people want to know where food is coming from and who farmed it, traceability = farm stands, local outlets
  - q. Community pride in agriculture is important
  - r. Perception of Henrietta stops north of the thruway
  - s. Public awareness of agriculture - open space is not agriculture
  - t. Vision that Town promotes agricultural awareness in the town and community pride, supportive of agriculture
  - u. Value added/processing/higher end
  - v. Increased diversity and turn key operations are important
  - w. Global market has a lot of influence - very little control over market
  - x. Vision that the Town supports savvy farmers running viable operations
  - y. How does Town support agriculture? How could it? Incentives? How does it support other economic endeavors?
  - z. Town tax rate is very low so not a lot of funds available from Town.



3. Potential topics for survey – in addition to list in handout:
  - a. Adequate drainage
  - b. Public access to farm operations, now or intent – open or by appointment
  - c. How do you market produce?
  - d. Specifically ask about succession plan – 20 years, 30 yrs
  - e. Willingness/interest in protection via easements/PDRs, etc.
  
4. General Comments
  - a. Who would farmers advocate to get higher ag discount in exchange for teaching ag at schools?
  - b. How will public meetings be advertised?
  - c. What about surveys of livestock farmers and residents (non-farming)?
  - d. Ag friendly zoning – housing/business costs go up when farmland goes away
  - e. Farmland also provides rural character to residents and it's important to people that live there – residents are willing to pay for that privilege.
  - f. Large grant dollars are available for farmland protection. See: <https://www.morningagclips.com/protecting-farmland-in-the-finger-lakes/>
  - g. Genesee Land Trust helps protect farm properties including three highlighted in a recent newsletter: Stebbins, Albright, and Cornwall <http://geneseeandtrust.org/interactive-map.aspx>. All tools, including easements and PDRs should remain on the table during committee discussions and farmer and resident surveys.
  - h. Contact Bill Chase – farm based in Rush but farming land in Henrietta. Also recently received funding for a conservation easement on one of their properties in Rush from Genesee Land Trust and NYS.
  - i. Consider contacting Farm Viability Institute and builders and contractors.
  - j. Provide Advisory Committee with a summary of existing farmland plans for reference.
  - k. Does Town have access to information such as traffic counts, population, demographics, etc. that would be of value to new or existing businesses?
  - l. Why is Monroe IDA a stakeholder if they give no financial incentive for farmland?
  
5. Meeting Materials
  - a. Agenda
  - b. Draft Plan Outline
  - c. Resource Maps
  - d. List of Potential Survey Topics
  - e. List of Stakeholders and Contacts