

Environment, Energy & Climate

BOL Meeting Minutes - Published Draft

Committee Chair: Erika Pierce

800 Michaelian Office Bldg.
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
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Tuesday, July 19, 2022

2:30 PM

Committee Room

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting will be held pursuant to Chapter 1 of the New York State Laws of 2022 and Executive Order 11, as extended, which authorize any public body to meet and take such action authorized by law without permitting in public-in-person access to meetings and authorize such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed. To access the meeting, please visit: <https://westchestercountyny.legistar.com>.

With a quorum present, Chair Pierce called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

Others in attendance: BOL: Legislator Terry Clements (Remote), Committee Coordinator Jill Axelrod; Planning Dept.: David Kvinge (Remote)

Present: Committee Chair Pierce, Committee Vice-Chair Barr and Legislator Williams Johnson

Absent: Legislator Parker and Legislator Tubiolo

MINUTES APPROVAL

Tuesday, June 28, 2022 at 2:30 p.m.

On motion of Legislator Williams Johnson, seconded by Committee Vice-Chair Barr, the minutes were approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Committee Chair Pierce, Committee Vice-Chair Barr and Legislator Williams Johnson

Absent: Legislator Parker and Legislator Tubiolo

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Guest: Planning Department: Assistant Commissioner David Kvinge

1. [2022-397](#) **PH - Westchester County Agricultural District 1 - Add Parcels**

Chair Pierce gave background on the Ag Board and Ag Districts. She said that the County's policy is to conserve, protect, and encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural land for production of food and other agricultural products, and to conserve and protect agricultural lands as valued natural and ecological resources, which provides needed open space for clean air and water. That is why the Ag District falls into the responsibilities of the Environment committee. We have two important tools in the County that help keep agricultural going. One is the Agricultural Farmland Protection Board, also known as the Ag

Board, which is a dedicated group of farming professionals that meets monthly and is a major force in supporting the County's agricultural activity. It was created in 1999 by the Board of Legislators. The second tool is the Agricultural District. The Ag Board is the gatekeeper to getting new parcels into the Ag District, and approval by the Board of Legislators is the second part. The Ag District helps to protect and preserve land under active agricultural production or which could be used for agricultural production. The Westchester County Ag District was created in 2001, and is currently limited to farms within eight Westchester municipalities, with a set of established criteria for inclusion in the district. For the first time in many years, we have a group of farms which the Ag Board has deemed as qualified for addition to the Ag District.

Assistant Commissioner Kvinge said they received six applications to add land to the Ag District. The last time they added land to the District was 2018. The Ag Board is recommending inclusion of three parcels: Application #2022-3 - Katonah Nursery in Somers, #2022-04 - Orchard Hill Organics in Somers, and #2022-06 - Anther Farm in Yorktown.

Legislator Williams Johnson asked is there a minimum acreage or lot size requirement to be part of the Ag District, because there are a couple of farms in Greenburgh that could be part of this. Mr. Kvinge said that in Greenberg and Mount Pleasant, we had some nice big greenhouse operations that we lost during the last recertification process. There is no minimum lot size for farms, but right now parcels in those communities are not eligible for inclusion in the District. Chair Pierce asked whether there is a path for Greenburgh to be included in the District. Mr. Kvinge said yes; during the recertification process, we can make those changes. There is a report that gets filed with the State during the recertification process, and that is where we continued with the restriction of agricultural district properties to those communities that were listed. We can change that during the recertification process which will probably start in 2023 or so. We could start conversations early on and reach out to local municipal officials to see where we can gain interest in getting some additional communities back. He noted that you need at least 500 contiguous acres to start a district, but once you have one, the district does not have to be contiguous.

Legislator Williams Johnson asked if the district can include community gardens. Mr. Kvinge said we haven't really done that because a lot of community gardens are not commercial, but we can find a different way to include them or find another way to help promote them. Legislator Williams Johnson said the Bethel Baptist Church and Woodlands High School both have plots of land that are used as community gardens. Chair Pierce said she loves the idea of developing a path for community gardens and urban agriculture, either in this program or by creating a parallel program, which may be an easier fit for that.

Legislator Williams Johnson asked if there are any black farmers included in the district. Mr. Kvinge said that the board members of Friends of Hilltop Hanover are very interested in addressing those social equity issues and getting more people of color involved in the programming going on now and trying to find ways that we can involve down county organizations and other organizations that are working in that space. We are also trying to tap into the indigenous knowledge of immigrants coming to this country with agricultural backgrounds.

Legislator Williams Johnson asked that Mr. Kvinge copy the committee when he reaches out

to municipalities during the next recertification process. Mr. Kvinge said they typically hire a consultant, but they will develop a whole engagement plan and involve the committee in that .

Chair Pierce said that the notice and report attached to the public hearing resolution and the addendum to the EAF list all six parcels that originally applied and will need to be adjusted so that they only include the three parcels recommended for inclusion.

On motion of Legislator Williams Johnson, seconded by Committee Vice-Chair Barr, the above item was signed by committee. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Committee Chair Pierce, Committee Vice-Chair Barr and Legislator Williams Johnson

Absent: Legislator Parker and Legislator Tubiolo

2. [2022-398](#) **ENV RES - Westchester County Agricultural District 1 - Add Parcels**

See discussion of ID #2022-397 above.

On motion of Legislator Williams Johnson, seconded by Committee Vice-Chair Barr, the above item was signed by committee. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Committee Chair Pierce, Committee Vice-Chair Barr and Legislator Williams Johnson

Absent: Legislator Parker and Legislator Tubiolo

3. [2022-399](#) **RES - Westchester County Agricultural District 1 - Add Parcels**

See discussion of ID #2022-397 above.

On motion of Legislator Williams Johnson, seconded by Committee Vice-Chair Barr, the above item was signed by committee. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Committee Chair Pierce, Committee Vice-Chair Barr and Legislator Williams Johnson

Absent: Legislator Parker and Legislator Tubiolo

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

1. [2022-180](#) **CLERK OF THE BOARD - Agricultural District Application**

On motion of Committee Vice-Chair Barr, seconded by Legislator Williams Johnson, the above item was received, filed, and approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Committee Chair Pierce, Committee Vice-Chair Barr and Legislator Williams Johnson

Absent: Legislator Parker and Legislator Tubiolo

2. [2022-189](#) **CLERK OF THE BOARD - Westchester County Agricultural District Application Request - Orchard Hill Rd.,Katonah**

On motion of Committee Vice-Chair Barr, seconded by Legislator Williams Johnson, the above item was received, filed, and approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Committee Chair Pierce, Committee Vice-Chair Barr and Legislator Williams Johnson

Absent: Legislator Parker and Legislator Tubiolo

3. [2022-190](#) **CLERK OF THE BOARD - Westchester County Agricultural District Application Request - Smith Ridge Rd., Vista**

On motion of Committee Vice-Chair Barr, seconded by Legislator Williams Johnson, the above item was received, filed, and approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Committee Chair Pierce, Committee Vice-Chair Barr and Legislator Williams Johnson

Absent: Legislator Parker and Legislator Tubiolo

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Committee Vice-Chair Barr, seconded by Legislator Williams Johnson, the Committee adjourned at 3:29 p.m. by the following vote:

Aye: Committee Chair Pierce, Committee Vice-Chair Barr and Legislator Williams Johnson

Absent: Legislator Parker and Legislator Tubiolo