

# Goals and Recommendations to CPUC From the Agriculture Sub Committee

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Sept 28, 2023

1. We would like to see some type of light retail/ and farm service business on the western end of Rt 20. Being near the border of the Town of Princeton would possibly allow development with the negotiated use of Princetown's water resources. By creating a business zone in this area, the hope is to reduce traffic and reduce energy resources on the Route 20-155 corridor, by being closer to the residences of Western Guilderland.
2. In the RA 3 and RA 5 zone we would encourage flexible zoning options for increasing the density of development in areas where public and sewer is available. Even a minor subdivision project, the hope is reducing the footprint of new homes by placing them on smaller lots and allowing the saved property to be used for agricultural enterprise/open space. We understand this is a complex goal; soil type, drainage, and Albany County Health department requirements would have to be addressed.
3. An agriculture committee should be formed, with oversight by the town. The purpose of this committee would be to incentivize a farmer to utilize any open space or agricultural lands that the town owns or any suitable open private property, which could be worked and maintained so the property does not become overgrown. It would be another tool in the shed to keep farmlands in agriculture. Financial benefits would have to be developed for both the farmer and the landowner.
4. We encourage the town to continue the flexible conservation easement program (tiered payments depending on the length of the easement). We encourage the town to enter into partnerships with the variously affected school districts, in the hope that school tax abatements can be added to this program. Better communication from the town, about the availability

and the tiered structure of this program would be an important improvement of this conservation tool.

5. Purchase of development rights: The town should seek resources to fund this program. We encourage the town to embark on this project in a more flexible manner. We would encourage the town to have flexible PDR's terms of 25 to 60 years. This way it would be a less costly and would allow future generations of residents to control their own resources. "Forever" forfeiture of property rights, limits many landowners' consideration of this program as a viable possibility. Possible ways to fund this project would be through substantial development fees on projects in town, which cost in excess of 5 million dollars.
6. The use of town funds should NOT be used for the purchase of agricultural land for the benefits of the residences of town. These properties should remain as tax generating enterprises.
7. Solar farms in town should be used on areas that do not impact prime agricultural soils or view sheds that have been identified as important to the town and neighborhoods. Large scale solar farms, however that term is defined, must be located near a phase power infrastructure (National Grid) with sufficient southern exposure. Regardless of present zoning, the town should map such delineated areas, which would be routinely brought up to date.
8. The sub-committee is concerned about the management of wildlife habitat, through well-planned forestry practices to preserve the town's large acreage of forests. Open space includes not only fields and cropland but also our numerous valuable woodlots. An offshoot of such concerns is the protection of wildlife, and the preservation of honey production and maple syrup production which are growing more popular, and lumber/firewood production. These activities are based on the responsible management of our forested areas. We do, however, recognize the important role played by NYDEC with regards to this issue.
9. When considering extension or establishment of new municipal water and/or sewage services in the undeveloped western portions of the Town,

the potential specific and cumulative impacts of the inevitable future developments on the rural character of these areas should be assessed and weighed against the values of sustaining those qualities.

10. The subcommittee recognizes the value of the Watervliet Reservoir and the surrounding property as valuable open space within town. We encourage the town to explore options as a partnership with the City of Watervliet to preserve this open space. Also due to a lack of accessible aquatic locations in town, consideration might be give to limited access to the reservoir for educational and certain recreational activities. Finally, in partnership with Watervliet, both entities should seek acquire funds, through grants and other means, to clean up the backwater area which is visible from Route 20.

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