

Environment, Farms, and Food

Missing Goals

1. Mitigate GHG emissions / GHG reduction policy
2. Sustainability manager at county needs to be aggressive and have a meaningful budget and decision-making authority
3. Planning around long-term population growth
 - a. Prevent sprawl, etc.
4. Include energy burden in affordable housing calculation
5. Paid farmers market managers; financial resources to support farmers' market
6. 4-season indoor community greenhouse
7. Dealing with Hazardous Algal Blooms
8. Existing programs, if implemented properly, would address environmental issues and need county support and more inter-agency so work can complement other work
9. Paid community garden manager
10. Teach residents how to grow their own food
11. Encourage food production facilities to operate in Monroe County
12. County and state support for career agriculture program or spearhead a collaborative conversation about it/inventory needed or encourage school districts to work with BOCES
13. Help communities build/have capacity for programs like CEC or CSC through technical support
14. Make ongoing collaborative conversations more productive
15. County could make what they do more transparent and clear
16. Incorporate more water quality goals and strategies
17. Prevent green gentrification – not displacement – support for community land trusts
18. Build a good network of heating/cooling emergency shelters for power outages

Missing Priorities

1. Maintaining an adequate workforce/living wages/farm workers; domestic farm labor force which is well paid
2. Transitioning to a more regenerative economic system through language in the county plan

Open Discussion:

1. Coordination of various plans: many plans are going on and we need someone to coordinate these plans to find common grounds
2. Watershed Plan to protect our water resource as a unified effort
3. There are resources from NY State: funding, legislatures support soil and water conservation. For example the NYS funding for Climate adaption and resilience, Ag and Market Climate Resilient Farming; Climate Resiliency funding applications...
4. Rather than refer to specific crops, refer to alternative crops generally. In response to Cannabis in Goal: Protection of Agriculture and Farmland, Strategies, #2, c.
5. Use more general language on the contents – avoid specific contents
6. Farmland is not unlimited, it needs to be protected.

What Missing:

1. List more specific training opportunities
2. Energy Resources – We need to be comfortable with transitioning from our current energy mix to a low-carbon mix. This includes nuclear, it has challenges, but it is a large source of power without GHGs. And Natural Gas will continue to be used, let's embrace that as we are transitioning, focus on reduced GHGs across the board while recognizing that not everything will be Solar, Wind, etc.
3. Solar policy/preserving farmland from solar development. Strategies: use alternative land, for example, brownfields and rooftops.
 1. Model Law from Monroe County, that is different than NYS Model Law. Ideally this would be more protective of prime farmland and steer solar to subpar farmland.
 2. Solar goes in on farmland near transmission lines with capacity. If NYS wants to preserve farmland and install more solar, let's create solar development zones that are not on prime farmland. Either incentivize the areas or extend transmission lines to these areas to reduce pressure on prime farmland. NYS, NYSERDA, and RGE should pay for these programs.
4. Make farming profitable, it is the key to keeping farmland from development. Helping farmers make a profit on their farms will encourage succession for the next generations. This means support industries, such as equipment dealers/supplies, processing/markets, local food purchasing and marketing.
5. Processing industry – think about what crops fit in our climate: squash, dairy, cabbage. For example, we are currently in shortage of butcher. Need guidance and coordination to prioritize the processing
6. Current purchasing practice: State bidding system favors industrial suppliers rather than local suppliers. Need to promote local suppliers and make it easier to buy local.
7. Composting is a way to reduce food waste. Need to encourage/facilitate local and home composting, rather than shipping compost to centralized locations and burning gasoline to do so.
 1. Additionally, we waste too much food. Reduce waste of food!
8. Open space and farms have deer issues, they come in and eat crops and create safety issues. This is especially problematic near large County Parks that do not allow hunting (Northampton Park). County Parks could consider setting rules for bow hunting – this could bring in money (permitting) and reduce the deer population. Limit times, days, sections, and ensure good hunters.
9. Access to energy: mixed sources of clean energies
10. Think globally beyond Northeast US
11. Help finance farm – NYS Ag. And Market offer grants. Assistance to farmers to get these grants
12. Conservation easements
13. State to improve / demand RGE to improve infrastructure: create a broader electric transit line, enable solar energy hooked-up in broader areas.

Side note after the session:

A table member identified the need to make a safer route for pedestrians and cyclists to get to and from Northampton Park and the Erie Canal. Suggested routes – Gallup Road, Sweden-Walker Road – all less than 1.5 miles.