

Mission Statement

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Copake Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2011, recognized that the promotion of agriculture is a primary goal for the Town. Farming is fundamental to our history and essential to our future. The Comprehensive Plan urged that the Town adopt an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan.

In 2013 the Town Board appointed a Farmland Protection Committee. That Committee submitted a proposed Town of Copake Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. On January 8, 2015 the Town adopted the **Town of Copake Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan** (hereinafter, Farmland Protection Plan) as an Addendum to the 2011 Town of Copake Comprehensive Plan.

As a first step in ensuring the implementation of the Farmland Protection Plan, the Town has created an **Agricultural Advisory Committee** (hereinafter AAC). The Mission of the AAC is to pursue the Goals identified in the Farmland Protection Plan, to wit:

1. Increase the stability and financial success of farms to ensure a long-term vibrant farming community in Copake.
2. Increase the diversity of agricultural operations and expand opportunities for agri-tourism, and for value added, niche and other locally-grown specialty crops.
3. Enhance the availability of locally-grown, affordable food.
4. Widen public knowledge of, support for, and engagement with agriculture.
5. Enhance public/private partnerships that support and promote agriculture in Town.
6. Improve communication, collaboration, and cooperation among all those involved with agriculture.
7. Ensure farmlands are affordable and accessible to farmers.
8. Increase the number of new and young farmers actively involved in agriculture to form the next generation of farmers.
9. Maintain a critical mass of farmland in Copake.
10. Promote environmentally sustainable farm practices to protect water and soil quality and open spaces.

The responsibilities of the AAC shall be to:

1. Have knowledge of, and be guided by, the relevant sections of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law, including but not limited to Article 25-AA, Agriculture Districts.
2. Support agriculture in Copake through education, communication, conflict resolution, and regulatory guidance, and by promoting the economic viability of farming.
3. Provide farmers with a forum to express their concerns and to coordinate with Town officials on important policy, advocacy and marketing opportunities.
4. Serve as the mediator for farm/non-farm conflicts. In essence, the Committee will act as an ombudsman committee to advocate for and assist farms and farmers in Copake and to bridge the gap between non-farmers and farmers.

5. Upon request, to advise the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board, on matters affecting the agricultural resources of the Town. When requested, the AAC shall render an opinion regarding the impact of proposed development, subdivisions, or buildings on agriculture.
6. Upon a request from the Town Board, to advise that body with regard to the matters which involve or affect agriculture.
7. To recommend to the Town Board, Town Planning Board or other agencies techniques or strategies which will help preserve agriculture in Copake

The Committee shall be comprised of 3 to 7 town residents who possess a strong interest in the Committee's mission, as well as knowledge and experience in at least one of the following areas: farming, agri-business, veterinary medicine, agricultural education, agri-tourism.

January 30, 2015 Final Draft