AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – FEBRUARY 25, 2020

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Fedler, Hicks, Skellie, Rozell, Griffith
AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Shaw, Campbell
SUPERVISORS: Hall, Henke, Ferguson, Losaw

Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board
Chris DeBolt, County Administrator
Pam Landi, Planner
Public
Al Nolette, County Treasurer
Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director
Brian Gilchrist, Exec. Director Cornell Coop. Ext.

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

1) Call to Order
2) Accept Minutes – January 21, 2020
3) CS Energy, Matt Tripoli – Large Scale Solar Project Benefits
4) Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corp. (HVADC), Todd Erling – Year End Report
5) Snowmobile Program
   A. SEQR for Phase 1 of 20-21 Snowmobile Grant Application
6) Other Business
7) Adjournment

Chairwoman Fedler called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

A motion to accept the minutes of the January 21, 2020 meeting was moved by Mr. Griffith, seconded by Mr. Skellie and adopted.

CS ENERGY – Matt Tripoli, Direct Development Activities for CS Energy in upstate New York, discussed the benefits of a large scale solar project, handout attached. A lot has been happening in New York State with solar energy. The cost of solar has been falling; more competitive against fossil fuels for power. They have been involved in solar projects in New York for about three years; they are a New Jersey based business. Ag and Markets in consultation with NYSERDA came out with new standards last year for the construction of large scale solar projects; i.e. solar facility 50+ acres during construction have to preserve agricultural soils. NYSERDA is grading projects based on soils; limit impact to agricultural soils. Electrical infrastructure follows the major waterways and that is where there is the biggest opportunity for solar projects. They would use the existing power structure rather than build the lines out; i.e. not as many projects towards the Vermont border. They hire locally. Two different models for solar: community distributed generation, around 30 acres, – projects that sell retail electricity and large scale solar projects, 100 – 200 acres, that sell power for wholesale. Those projects result in long term stability with electric prices in the future. Solar has momentum and the climate legislation in New York has attracted a lot of interest and those two things together provide a lot of opportunities for Washington County. CS Energy has two large projects in Easton and one on the table for Fort Edward. The projects are an investment in property as a result of that investment the value increases and as a broader industry with their projects offer jobs, local workforce development. The solar industry is here to stay in New York and provides opportunities for jobs.

HUDSON VALLEY AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (HVADC) – Todd Erling, presented the 2019 Year-End Report, attached. Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation is a multi-county project supporting farms and farm dependent businesses with economic development tools and programs with the attitude and perspective that it is economic development;

food and agriculture as economic development. A motion to approve a waiver/exemption from Procurement policy was moved by Mr. Skellie, seconded by Mr. Griffith and adopted. A motion to renew annual contract with HVADC $25,000 was moved by Mr. Griffith, seconded by Mr. Skellie and adopted. They have access to some federal funding that was not here last year and can use the $25,000 contract to leverage funds. Vermont was awarded a four state northern borders regional commission grant and Washington County was identified through HVADC in it. Funding available in late 2020 and 2021. The Economic Development Director stated this might allow the County to fund projects with little to no match.

SNOWMOBILE PROGRAM – Dave Perkins addressed the following item with the committee:

- SEQR for Phase 1 of 2020-2021 Snowmobile Grant Application – Each year they have to file a phase 1 application with NYS Parks and Recreation and this year there are seven different changes from the current trails, handout attached of changes in Kingsbury and also one in Hartford. A motion to ask County Attorney to prepare SEQR resolution for March 12th Finance Committee meeting for phase 1 on behalf of snowmobile association was moved by Mr. Skellie, seconded by Mr. Hicks and adopted.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Rebecca Reardon, NYS Commissioner of Labor, will be in the training rooms downstairs giving the 2021 State budget presentation on March 10th , time to be determined, probably late morning.
- Census 2020 packet of information distributed to all Supervisors in mail slots. Regarding the census funding, had hoped to partner with LEAP but cannot reimburse for work during regular business hours. No resources available to comply and have access to the funding. Her recommendation is to decline the funding and do what we can with the complete count committee that was formed. They will give communities as much help as they can.

OTHER BUSINESS:

TOURISM - Andrew Meader addressed the committee.

- First meeting last evening in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension with business owners and organization from Washington County. They had a very healthy exchange of ideas and networking. The next meeting is at Slick Fin in Fort Edward on March 24th at 6 P.M.
- He received some preliminary data from Airbnb. Statistics on all the rooms – number of listing 153 in 2019 and up from 124 in 2018. Number of available nights in 2019 46,798. Nights booked in 2019 11,985 up from 8,958 in 2018, 33% increase. Revenue $1,967,781 in 2019 up from $1,626,000 in 2018, a 21% increase in revenue. Gross revenue for Home Away $2,072,091. Total Airbnb and Home away $4,039,872 and that is about half compared to Warren County. He is compiling a report with this information.
- Warren County Tourism Director and Committee Chair invited Washington County tourism representatives to meet and discuss about how Warren County could help. They stated at the end of the meeting that we were already doing everything right and are working on initiatives together. The County Attorney is still looking into the process to change the Occupancy Tax law and the committee requested an update at the Finance Committee meeting.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL PLANNING BOAD – Beth Gillis, Executive Director, stated they hired an Economic Development Coordinator, Andrea Palmer.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD – The County Administrator addressed. There is a three county consortium, Warren, Washington and Saratoga Counties. Saratoga County is the fiduciary agent. LEAP as a 501 3C operates the career center. LEAP responded to an RFP sent out by the Workforce Development Board and was awarded the contract for $430,000 to operate the Workforce Development center on the County's behalf. There have been some issues of late with the interfacing of the Workforce Investment Board Executive Director and the workforce centers and then specifically with the Administrators of the three counties. Saratoga County held a special Board meeting last week, rescinded agreement with Workforce Investment Board and that voids the entire agreement so we now have no multi-jurisdictional agreement to operate the Workforce Investment Board. The three County Administrators will be meeting to put forward a proposed new agreement for presentation to the County Boards for consideration. This is an issue that is bubbling up and they took steps at the staff level to try to resolve but to no avail. He is going to send a letter to the Executive Director of the Workforce Development Board requesting their financials and some clarification on some recent events that he finds very troubling. At some point in the next month or two hopes to have a draft agreement to bring forward for discussion and hopefully ratification. Al Nolette, County Treasurer and on the Board of Directors of LEAP, stated there are important conversations but cannot have them right now. Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director and member of the Workforce Development Board stated as a member not as well informed on issues as they should have been. The Treasurer stated we are working through it.

The meeting adjourned at 1:54 P.M.

Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Washington County Board of Supervisors

CS Energy

CS Energy is a leading integrated energy company that develops, designs, and builds optimized projects in the solar, storage, and emerging energy industries across the United States

Who We Are

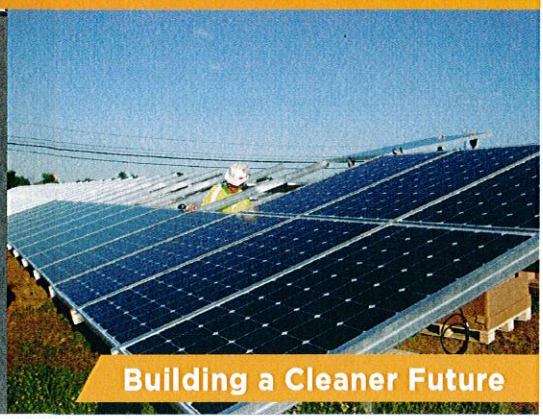
Industry-leading firm with a proven track record in NY - we are a reliable and long-term partner for communities and landowners.

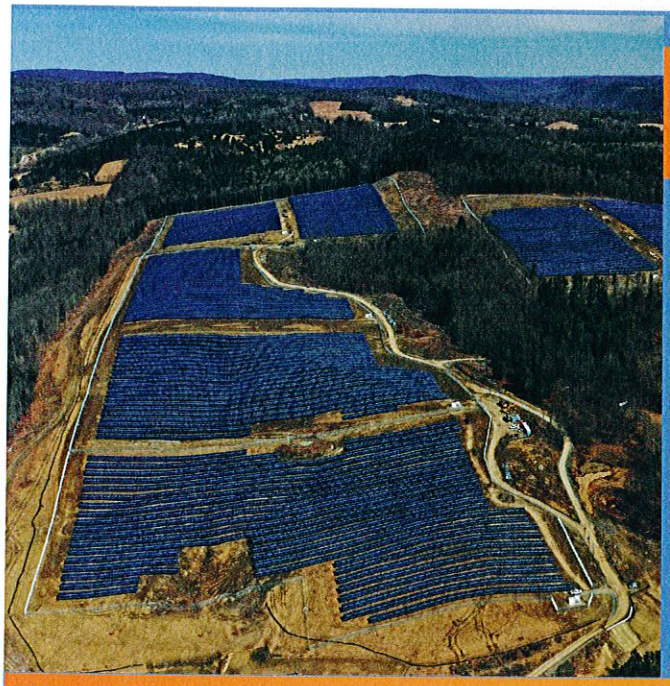
Darby and Branscomb Solar Projects in Easton, NY

Two projects // **$60 Million** in total investment.

2 years of close collaboration with stakeholders to ensure compatibility with the existing community.

Expected construction start in **late 2020**.





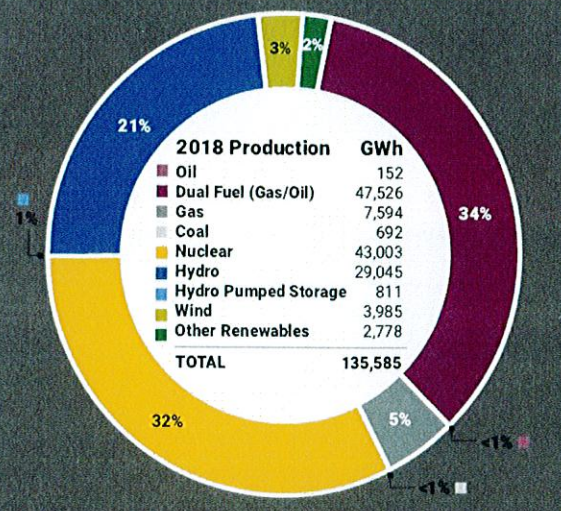
Falling Cost of Solar Power

- Module costs have dropped **> 70%** since 2010
- Solar and wind outpacing fossil fuels moving forward
- Clean Energy jobs growing **2 times faster** than NY's average

NY Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act

- Legislation passed in July 2019 making NY a **National** and **Global** leader in renewables
- Energy efficiency, offshore wind, energy storage goals
- Requires **6,000 MW's** of solar energy by 2025
- Improving standards from NY Ag & Markets

70% renewable energy by 2030



NYS 2018 Electricity Mix

Opportunity for Washington County

- Utilize **existing** infrastructure for community distributed generation and large-scale renewable projects
- 21st century family-sustaining jobs
- **Stable** energy costs and source of community funding

Building a Cleaner Future

Hudson Valley AgriBusiness
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

HVADC
507 Warren Street, 2nd Floor
Hudson, NY 12534
P: 518.432.5360
F: 888.317.5556

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Report to Washington County on HVADC 2019 Activities

Program Goals

To enhance the agricultural sector in Washington County by assisting both new and existing agri-businesses, and supporting policies and regulations that recognize and support the Hudson Valley's agricultural economy. Our services are designed to promote Washington County as an integral part of the Hudson Valley as an attractive, viable region for agriculture and to foster growth and development of the agricultural sector through a creative program or marketing, promotion and the provision and coordination of financial and other resources.

Scope of Services

1.) Technical assistance to farmers and farm-related/farm-dependent businesses applying for funding or implementing awards from various public and private sources to include but not limited to: USDA Value Added Grant, USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grants, SBA, EDA, NYS Consolidated Funding Applications, etc.

2.) Business planning services to local farmers and farm-related/farm-dependent businesses seeking to diversify production.

3.) Business expansion counseling to a local farmers and farm-related/farm-dependent businesses seeking to add process capacity and expand operations to make room for next generation.

4.) New farm and farm-related/farm-dependent businesses referrals for site search selection opportunities to locate in the county.

5.) Referrals to Washington County of viable agribusiness projects for consideration of funding support.

6.) Representation and technical support to ensure farms and farm-related/farm-dependent business interests are included in NYS Regional Economic Development Councils' plans and implementation.

7.) Local farm product sourcing for Farm-to-Table Co-packing and other regional commercial and institutional buyers.

8.) Development and promotion of farm and local business sourcing to support agri/culinary-tourism and educate the community members and markets of the role local sourcing plays in economic development through the Hudson Valley Bounty Program and regional branding.

HVADC is an equal opportunity employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6392 (TTD). USDA is an equal opportunity lender, provider and employer.

HVADC 2019 Programming Updates

Incubator Without Walls (IWW)

Incubator without Walls is a key feature of HVADC where new and existing agriculture-related businesses apply to receive individualized assistance. Qualified businesses that are admitted into our IWW program can tap into a wide range of services to accelerate their growth and increase their chances of long-term success. These services can include: business and financial planning, value-added infrastructure services, financing and networking. Through IWW, HVADC has been able to assist over 215 farms and businesses since 2007. The various types of services HVADC has provided through IWW include general business planning, strategic planning for growth and development, financial analysis, marketing and promotion through print, media, Facebook and Twitter, project planning, matchmaking services (i.e. referrals for consumer/chefs to appropriate farm businesses), food safety certification/planning and permitting.

Applicants to the program complete an in-take form to provide basic information about their business. HVADC staff then meets with the applicant to review and conduct an assessment of their needs. Upon completion of the assessment, HVADC develops an individualized program of services for the client. This process results in a highly effective and timely delivery of services designed to accommodate the varying schedules and availability of our clients.

IWW Clients:

Aster Farm is a micro farm scale (under 3 ac) and produces plant infused oils for skin care from calendula, chamomile and St John's wort. Owner Heather Daly requested assistance with business planning and would like to learn about any legal and labeling issues with skin care products. HVADC connected with a attorney who specializes in labeling for FDA compliance and a business planning consultant. Recently, Heather has taken a step back from the business planning process for personal reasons. HVADC will remain in contact and provide assistance as appropriate.

Battenkill Fibers Carding and Spinning Mill (Greenwich) manufactures artisan quality natural—colored and kettle—dyed premium knitting yarns using traditional semi-worsted milling machinery. The fiber facility processes for over 350 farms. HVADC has worked this past year with owner Mary Jeanne Packer to secure the final piece of equipment needed to close out a $60,000 USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant. The equipment has greatly expanded Battenkill's ability to spin yarn, making this facility a critical asset in the fiber industry here in the Hudson Valley region.

Lavenlair Farm (Whitehall) is a 4,000 plant farm selling 32 varieties of lavender and producing a wide variety of lavender bath and body products and lavender honey. A graduate of the Farm and Food Funding Accelerator, HVADC has continued to work with this unique lavender farm on developing a grant application for NYS New Farmer grant and with identifying a possible bottler for a new lemonade beverage that is being developed. HVADC also assisted Lavenlair in reviewing their business plan which won first place in the inaugural SUNY Adirondack Business Plan competition.

Tiashoke Farm (Buskirk) is a 5th generation dairy farming family looking to explore value added opportunities. HVADC has helped evaluate options for establishing a value-added cheese production operation to provide growth opportunities for this large dairy farm. This included assisting with the development of a business plan and with consideration of the purchase of a nearby existing cheese and yogurt producer. HVADC has also connected the family with a dairy consultant who specializes in plant design and locating equipment.

Meat Hook is a whole animal butcher shop located in Brooklyn, N.Y., specializing in local meat from small, family-run farms in New York state. All of the beef is 100% grass-fed and grass-finished and our pork and lamb is pasture raised. The meat travels directly from the farm to family-owned slaughterhouses to the shop with no middleman. The Meat Hook is looking to grow strategically and sustainably over a five-year period through a Whole Foods account for the sausage and Eagle Bridge will process. Through interactions with HVADC, they were able to participate in the Chobani Incubator 3-month program consisting of on-site programming in New York, and visits to Chobani facilities, retailers, and trade shows. In addition, HVADC also connected the Meat Hook to the Washington County Local Development Corporation to assist when ready to proceed in the plan and HVADC will reconnect with 2020 to determine next steps.

Farm and Food Funding Accelerator (FFFA)
The FFFA supports the creation and growth of robust regional supply chains by providing entrepreneurs with the tools they need to be successful. This program is designed to help farmers and food entrepreneurs develop the necessary skills and materials to scale their business, build sales, and access financing sources. HVADC has completed the second round of accelerator programs which included one Washington County business, Battenkill Valley Farms, and has begun the process of collecting program data.

Results from the first round of nine businesses, including Lavenlair Farm located in Whitehall and Argyle Cheese Farmer located in Argyle, exceeded all project goals include:

- $22M in sales, a 27% increase
- Sourced over $3.3M from 65 regional farms
- Developed 22 expanded market opportunities and created 42 new market opportunities
- Supported 25 additional full-time jobs and 25.5 part-time

Battenkill Valley Farms strategically located between Saratoga Spring, Manchester, VT, and Lake George, owner Ted Berndt first operated a corn maze/ haunted house on his property in 2017 and an antique and flea market in 2018. Ted joined the FFFA program to focus on further developing the property by opening a destination agri-tourism venue, including a farmers market, craft fair and craft beverage facility that would generate revenue from vendors. His plans include converting 24 grow buildings into vendor space and developing utility infrastructure for the space. After completing the program in June, Ted recently announced the Battenkill Valley Farms - Farmers' Market and Craft Fair is set to open its 2020 season on Saturday, May 9th. The market will have 100 plus vendors and will operate on Saturdays from 9 AM to 4:30 PM. The market is a rain or shine event with 40 outside and 60 inside vendor booths that continues through mid-October.

Through the work on Battenkill Valley Farms, Laura Oswald, Director of Economic Development made HVADC aware of an Agri-tourism survey being conducted by 8 of Eight Strategies. HVADC was able to support the effort financially and worked collaboratively to develop survey questions about the agri-tourism industry.

The third round of the FFFA started in October and includes a start-up Washington County business, **Soulcraft Brewery** located in Cambridge. Led by Jamie Caligure an experienced commercial brewer, Soulcraft is situated on 20 beautiful acres. Soulcraft will be a farm brewery, taproom, market and creative gathering space. Soulcraft collaborates with local farmers, growers and producers to create unique beverages utilizing N.Y. ingredients. For the Caligures it is a full body experience using their hands to farm and forage for ingredients that utilize sustainable practices. Seasonal ingredients will dictate the farmhouse saison beer styles and recipes, and original recipes will be developed based upon the availability of the

natural flora and fauna and on the property. Wild yeast on the farm will be cultivated and utilized to create a truly distinctive terroir.

Over the course of the next six to eight months, Jamie and his peers will engage in a series of one-on-one mentoring sessions, group interaction and industry networking events to learn how to talk to investors, discover new market opportunities, and pitch to potential funders in spring 2020.

Hudson Valley Bounty (HVB)

Hudson Valley Bounty (HVB) continues to be the region's most comprehensive local farm and food portal. HVADC continues to successfully use the Hudson Valley Bounty program to promote its farmer and chef members including those in Washington County. With an average of 2,000 site users per month, the website is actively providing consumer exposure to our nearly 500 business members.

Due to HVADC's multi-year investment in HVB, it is a well-recognized brand in the Hudson Valley. This programming allows HVADC to utilize HVB in a variety of ways. In addition to informing our members of important information such as grant opportunities and education/training sessions, we have developed a consumer newsletter to alert the region to the many happenings at our farms and restaurants. Participation in Hudson Valley Bounty is free, and farms and food businesses may submit their information at hudsonvalleybounty.com. As the region's go-to-resource for local food and farm offerings, Hudson Valley Bounty provides participants with exposure on its high-traffic website used by local consumers, tourists, chefs, farmers, wholesalers, and institutional buyers; the opportunity to be featured on Hudson Valley Bounty social media, email newsletters, and blog; as well as access to Hudson Valley Bounty's curated newsletters containing information on grant and financing opportunities, training workshops, events, and opportunities to promote their business or sell their product.

The Cultivator

HVADC launched a monthly newsletter in 2017 that provides insights on the work we do, our clients, our partners and other information pertinent to the work we do with farms and food related businesses. The Cultivator has featured articles on several Washington County clients and partners in 2019 including Battenkill Valley Farms, Owl Wood Farm and Lavenlair Farm and Argyle Cheese Farmer for the SUNY Adirondack Business Plan competition. Past articles include Locust Grove Smokehouse, Laughing Earth Farm, Battenkill Fibers and the Agricultural Stewardship Association. Please see HVADC's website (www.hvadc.org) to review past articles and to sign up to receive the **Cultivator** in your inbox.

JDA Loan Fund

HVADC has been named as one of eight third party lenders participating in the New York Job Development Authority's (JDA) Agriculture Loan Fund Program. Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced the new JDA initiative, which will provide $10 million in funding, on February 7, 2018. Approved lenders were named throughout the state, with HVADC covering the Mid-Hudson and Capital regions.

Through the Agriculture Loan Fund Program, HVADC and the other participating lenders will be making low interest loans between $50,000 and $200,000 to small agribusiness owners. Qualified businesses include value-added processors, food distribution companies, food aggregators, craft beverage producers, farms, and Food Hub participants. The projects qualifying for loans may include the acquisition of and/or improvements to land or buildings, the purchase of machinery and equipment, and working capital that will be used in support of the New York State agricultural industry.

Regional Opportunities for HVADC Partner Counties

Governor's Regional Economic Development Council

In 2011, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the establishment of the NYS Regional Economic Development Councils to promote strategic planning, community development, job creation and economic growth in New York State. The Regional Councils are a community based, bottom-up approach to economic development made up of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government, and NGOs. Since 2011, the Regional Councils have awarded over $1.5 billion in funding to a wide variety of innovative projects that promote growth and reflect the distinct characteristics of each region through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process.

2019 Agriculture related CFA awards include:

- Luncrest Farm, LLC, a regionally significant project, was awarded $350,000 to construct a new milking center and free stall barn to house cattle, produce milk and provide a showplace to market cattle.

Taste NY

The Adirondack Region Food and Farms Business Expo was held on Thursday, December 12, 2019 at SUNY Adirondack in Queensbury, NY from 10am to 2pm. This business-to-business event, which is organized and sponsored by the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Washington County, and Taste NY, featured 50 local farmers, food and beverage producers, brewers, cider- and wine-makers, and distillers. HVADC worked with CCE of Washington to promote the event to vendors as an opportunity to showcase, market and sell their products onsite, while allowing buyers to sample and purchase high-quality goods that are grown and made in New York.

Hudson Valley Textile Project Summit

The Hudson Valley Textile Project is a community of farmers, dyers, millers, designers, makers, distributors, and retailers who have come together to share their knowledge and resources. HVADC Deputy Director Mary Ann Johnson was a presenter at the 3rd Annual Summit of the group held at SUNY New Paltz in March. The focus for this summit is to strengthen the Hudson Valley sustainable textile supply chain thru education, community, networking and collaborations. Ms. Johnson spoke about the importance of business planning and share the available resources HVADC can offer to farmers and processors in the network.

Federal Reserve Bank of New York Hudson Valley Tour

HVADC Deputy Director Mary Ann Johnson coordinated and hosted the President of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, John Williams, at MX Morningstar Farm in Claverack along with HV Fisheries and Fishkill Farms on July 10 for a regional discussion of farm and agribusiness financial wellness issues. Additionally, HVADC facilitated Laura Oswald's participation in President William's stop at Hudson Valley Community College with Empire State Development.

William's visit to Claverack was part of a two-day tour of the region where he met with key stakeholders to learn about local economic conditions. In addition to the challenges facing agribusiness, other topics explored included workforce development, changing demographics, concerns about equitable growth, and a lack of affordable housing and public transportation. Learn more in the full report of William's tour of the Hudson Valley.

"The labor force and access to capital issues raised by the farmers during the dialogue are both keys issues and of importance to the New York Fed," said Javier Silva, Senior Associate Director of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. "The visit to MX Morningstar Farm is part of the New York Fed's ongoing efforts to deepen understanding of regional economic conditions. Meeting with business, community groups, and local officials allows the New York Fed to identify ways to further support the Second District. While we cannot address all the challenges we hear during these trips, we can leverage our convening power, build connections within the District and utilize our research capabilities to provide support where we can."

Rebuild Rural America Act Joint Press Conference

At the Hudson office of Congressmen Delgado, HVADC Executive Director Todd Erling joined Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Congressman Antonio Delgado (19th District) as they announced the Rebuild Rural America Act (RRRA) in Hudson on October 21. Erling stressed the importance of having best practices incorporated from other federal programs and state programs in New York and cited the instance of the regional council process of developing regions that formulate strategies that then help tee up opportunities for applicants. Best practices that will insure flexibility, consistency and stability.

Business Roundtable with ESD Commissioner Eric Gertler

HVADC Executive Director Todd Erling participated in the business roundtable hosted by Regeneron Mike Yvoli of Empire State Development for the Capital Region at Regenoron. As an executive committee member of the Capital District REDC, Mr. Erling represented the agricultural voice for economic development in the region sharing both successes and needs/opportunities for farm and food businesses during an extended visit with Mr. Gertler.

Access to Capital

HVADC facilitated the *Access to Capital for Food, Beverage & Agricultural Enterprises* event held at UAlbany on June 12, 2019. In addition to being on the organizing committee, HVADC co-sponsored the event in partnership with NYS Ag & Markets, Empire State Development, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Columbia Economic Development Corporation and UAlbany's Green Scene. There were over 65 participants at the event.

HVADC is working with NYS Ag & Markets, Empire State Development, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and SUNY Cobleskill on another the *Access to Capital for Food, Beverage & Agricultural Enterprises* to be held at SUNY Cobleskill on February 25, 2020.

Northern Border Regional Commission

HVADC is a founding member of a collaboration between the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, The Carrot Project, The Joyce and Irving Goldman Family Foundation, The John Merck Fund, and more than 50 organizations that came together to create The Blueprint for New England and New York's Hudson Valley. This network applied for funding to pursue a project that advances the agricultural economy by launching an alliance of northeast agricultural business assistance providers (the Alliance), described in The Blueprint: Building a Business Assistance Network for Farm and Food Businesses (June 2018). The Alliance will support the revitalization and endurance of our agricultural economy across the Northern Border Region by increasing the number of economically viable farm and food businesses in New England and the Hudson Valley region of New York including Washington County. It will accomplish this by advancing and expanding the work of business assistance providers that work with farm and food businesses, providing networking and best practices, professional and workforce development trainings and activities, raising awareness and

educating policy-makers, and expanding capacity to provide high-quality, one-on-one business assistance services to farm and food businesses across the region, including underserved communities.

Additional details on the implementation of the project in Washington County will be available in the second quarter of this 2020.

Hudson Valley Farmlink Network

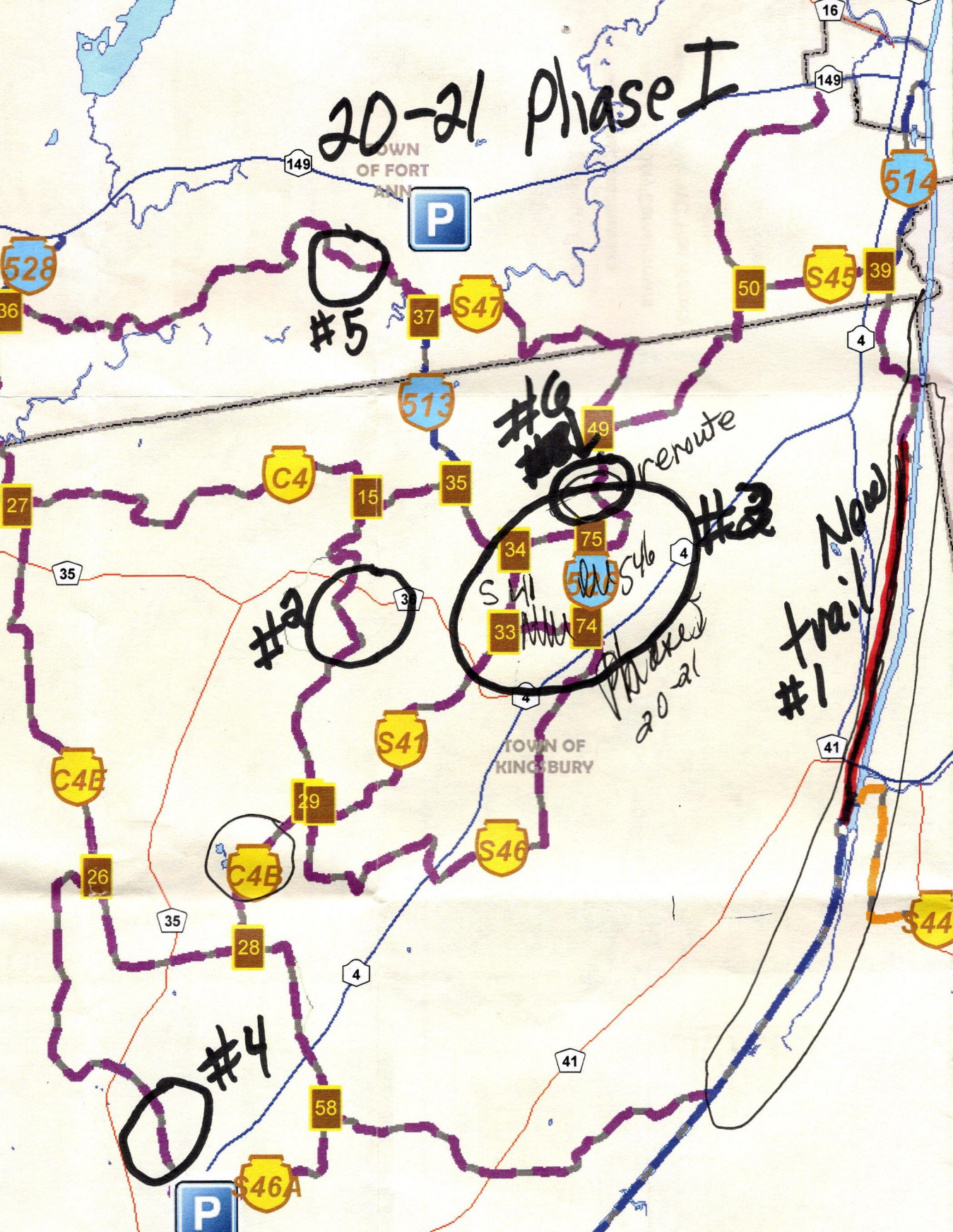
In response to farmland loss, the challenges faced by farmers in accessing farmland and the difficulties faced by families as they try to transfer their farms, agriculture and conservation groups came together to create the Hudson Valley Farmlink Network. The Hudson Valley Farmlink Network is a partnership of 17 organizations, coordinated by American Farmland Trust, offering the Hudson Valley Farmland Finder website, training and networking events, and one-on-one assistance for farmers and landowners. HVADC joined the network in 2018 and will be providing technical assistance to farmers. This effort has led to referrals from partnering organizations such as the Ag Stewardship Association to provide the services needed to reduce farmland loss and increase access to farmland for beginning farmers.

The Hudson Valley Farmlink Network serves 13 counties: Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland, Saratoga, Sullivan, Ulster, Washington, and Westchester.

Farm to Institution New York State

American Farmland Trust's Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS) program is a statewide partnership of agricultural, public health, and economic development partners who work together to maximize the total volume of locally produced food that is served in institutions such as schools, hospitals, senior centers, universities and more. HVADC is an active member of the FINYS leadership team where we have assisted in the development of several FINYS funding requests for the purpose of strengthening and supporting the farm and food economy of New York State.

FINYS has been working with a large coalition regarding Farm to School issues known as New York Grown for New York Kids. This coalition has been closely monitoring the new State incentive for school districts to use more local farm-fresh products, which provides an increase in the reimbursement schools receive for lunches from the current 5.9 cents per meal to 25 cents per meal for any district that purchases at least 30 percent ingredients from New York farms. HVADC actively seeks way to facilitate farmers, school districts and the state to bring more farm fresh food into the schools.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