

**Riverhead Comprehensive Plan Update**  
**12/13/21 Agriculture/Farmland Preservation Topic Meeting – Summary of Comments**

Name	Affiliation	Subtopic	Summary of Comment	Key Points/Recommendations for the Comp. Plan Update
Al Krupski	Suffolk County Legislator	Farmland preservation; renewable energy; capital budgets	Agriculture is very important in Suffolk County, as part of the culture and the economy. Money that comes in is dedicated to open space and farmland preservation. Riverhead like Southold has a lot of unprotected farmland. There is value to preserving large tracts of farmland. Soil is good here. Emerging crop of marijuana has to be economically driven. Crops change, generations change. In terms of food insecurity around the world, Riverhead has a great climate. The County will be making more offers on farmland. It's a voluntary process; it's a year-long process. The Conservation Subdivision Review Procedures - Southold model is a little different; your land is your equity; you need to preserve that equity. You have to do something with the money from selling development rights. You still keep a portion that you can subdivide and sell off. Riverhead had a good run at preserving a lot of farmland. County's program allows renewable energy production on preserved land for the operations. That helps offset long-term costs of operations. County put \$100 million into its capital budget over 10 years into farmland preservation. \$5 million will be available next year. This money is dedicated toward farmland preservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmland preservation is important.</li> <li>• Farming has to be economically driven.</li> <li>• Riverhead's farmland is important for food security.</li> <li>• The Town can partner with Suffolk County to preserve farmland.</li> <li>• Conservation Subdivision Review Procedures is a valuable tool for farmland preservation.</li> <li>• Allowing renewable energy on preserved farmland can offset operating costs.</li> <li>• The County has dedicated capital budget for farmland preservation.</li> </ul>
Frank Beyrodt	Town of Riverhead Councilman	Agriculture	The Town has a long history of farming that we need to keep and honor going forward. We need to be more serious about preservation efforts, but recognize that things will change. We need to adapt to the future changes. What is the East End going to look like in 2031? The Comp. Plan is about creating the vision for the future. Farmers need to make money. LIFB does a great job at advocating and making people aware of the issues. Wage increases are impending, we have development pressure, etc. This is the whole agriculture community. This needs to be a viable business going forward. How will we adopt rules that will ensure that farming going forward will be viable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town needs to preserve farmland and allow flexibility so that the farming can continue to be economically viable in the future.</li> </ul>
Rob Carpenter	Director, LI Farm Bureau	Agriculture; solar; trees; housing; water resources	The potential for flooding on roads on farmland. It's not really the farmers responsibility. Solar is a defacto preservation tool. Most solar can be removed quite easily. Solar on farmland means the farmland is not lost forever. The Town should revisit the solar code and consider allowing farmer to lease a portion to solar company to get revenue to help offset operating costs. This will prevent farms from being sold off to developers and help farms to stay in farming families. The Town should prioritize the purchase of trees from local farmers. Agricultural worker housing is important and needs to be thoroughly addressed by the Town. Farmers need water, irrigation, access to water on their farms. At time of 2003 Comp. Plan there was a population cap; the farm community was the only group of landowners that were required to be forced with an upzone of their land, losing equity. As a result, the TDR program was created to help offset some of that loss. The TDR program has not be as effective at preserving the farmland and helping the farmers as was promised. Now we're talking about needing additional housing and population to help the Town's economy; where is the equity for the farmers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowing solar on farmland is a tool toward preservation.</li> </ul>
John Halsey	President, Peconic Land Trust		We need to recognize the business of farming. There needs to be more revenue to acquire development rights, whether it's through TDR or PDR. We have to find more capital to make people whole if they want to protect their land and take the equity out. There was great promise around TDR but for a variety of reasons it didn't take off the way everyone hoped. You want as many tools as you can have in the toolbox to work with farm families. You need to understand their land, and land that is suitable for development. PLT helps farmers sort out the possibilities and the understand the different tools available to create a unique mix that helps them to achieve their goals. Conservation subdivision concept of incentivizing people to consider less density; tradeoff can be expedited review and sometimes combine PDR as part of the deal. Ag PDD or Ag Conservation District is another tool; if farmer commit to keeping their land as is they would go into PDD and zoning would be assured. This happened in the wake of an effort to upzone agricultural land, which soon followed in Southold Town. These programs provide security/equity to farmers and at same time to purchase development credits over time; you need capital to buy development rights. That has been a struggle for Riverhead Town; PDD didn't work as everyone hoped it would and CPF was bonded. You have to start with an appreciation and commitment to the business of farming; understand the needs of the farmers and be flexible; find ways to bring in capital without farmer having to sell land to developer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town needs to support the farmers so that farming is economically viable. There are various farmland preservation tools that the Town should consider including conservation subdivisions or Ag PDD or Ag Conservation District.</li> </ul>

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Richard Wines	TDR Subcommittee	TDR	Committee was formed in 2016; working on proposed TDR amendments. The Town has promised this will be adopted as part of the master plan review. Farmland is an important resource in Riverhead. We've preserved about 56% of our farmland according to PLT. The Town used up the funds in the CPF; there won't be funds left until the end of the decade, at which time the fund expires. The TDR program has a lot of potential but hasn't been fully utilized. There are ways to use Route 58, to expand commercial uses there, expand medical uses, allowing slightly bigger footprints, slightly taller buildings, might absorb 4-5 TDRs per acre; hospital would love to have convenient housing for their staff - hospital is one of the Town's largest economic generator. You can absorb 11-20 TDRs per acre for residential use; not increasing the Town's cap just moving it to a more convenient location. Assisted living makes sense next to the hospital and can absorb 14-33 TDRs. Route 58 can absorb 3k-5K TDRs, most of the farmland in the Town. Expand where you can sell TDRs from (e.g., Aquebogue, Jamesport, Laurel, south of Route 25 and north of Sound Avenue - Sound Avenue could be a sending area in addition to being a receiving area). We can look to industrial areas, possibly a slight increase in FAR for TDR. In Community Benefits Zone there should be min. requirements for TDR (none right now). In Retirement Community there should be a minimum requirement for TDR and there's none right now. One success they suggested Town Board revert back to original requirements for hotels to use TDR, which they did. A lot of news about accessory dwelling units, why not require a TDR to build an accessory dwelling unit. There could be a TDR bank, but that requires funding. There are suggestions for streamlining the process (e.g., Town could maintain lists of buyers/sellers; promote it). There are a lot of ways to improve this powerful tool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Town should consider the recommendations of the TDR Subcommittee.</li></ul>
Frank Beyrodt	Town of Riverhead Councilman	TDR; taxes	TDR has no cost to the taxpayers. TDR can be used to preserve farmland and help businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TDR is an important tool for farmland preservation and has the benefit of no cost to taxpayers.</li></ul>
Robert Skinner	Jamesport resident	Noise; agritainment	Noise from agritainment is adverse. Weddings are not essential for preserving farmland. Tent permit is approved by fire commissioners. There needs to public input if this type of use can be allowed to continue. Permits can reapplied for starting January 31st and can run for 180 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Town needs to address the adverse noise impacts that come from some of the agritainment uses (e.g., weddings).</li></ul>
Mike Foley	Reeves Park resident; South Park Heights Civic Association	Vision statement; agritainment; zoning	The Agricultural Vision Statement led to abuses that the residents have been fighting for the last 20 years. Vineyards are like farms. How many Vineyards are there in Riverhead? We need to consider how to classify the vineyards (e.g., with tasting rooms, kitchens [cider house], weddings), because these uses are an abuse to agribusiness. Road side stands, school field trips, riding lessons, hay rides, food trucks are acceptable; wine and cider tasting is an abuse to agritainment. The Town needs specific requirements that exclude abuses (weddings, amplified music). Solar on a scenic corridor detracts from the scenic character. Let's preserve our open space. Get rid of flexibility. Make it rigid. Do not give discretion to boards when it comes to preserving open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Agricultural Vision Statement needs to be updated.</li><li>• The Town needs to define agritainment and certain uses should be prohibited (e.g., weddings, catering, no amplified music).</li></ul>
Al DeSchmez (sp?)	Farmer	Agritainment; noise; zoning	In favor of agritainment, but weddings and parties should not be considered agritainment. Outdoor weddings are causing adverse noise. Riverhead has no enforcement on nights and weekends from May 1 to September 1. Proper zoning guidelines need to be drawn if these uses are considered to agricultural. Agricultural uses need to remain good neighbors. Noise ordinances need to be updated. Outdoor tent events are the root of the problem along with amplified music.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Town needs more stringent zoning regulations and noise ordinances to minimize the adverse noise effects associated with some agritainment uses (e.g., outdoor tent events).</li></ul>
Phil Barbato	Organic farmer, Jamesport	Food security; tax assessment; flexibility; TDR	We need 2-3 acres per person to feed ourselves. A lot of activities are considered farming, rightfully so, and these things will change over time, and we have to allow for that flexibility. We need to look at impact of farming activities on environment, water supply, and soil quality. Maybe give a different tax assessment number to farms that have positive effects. Negative effects (soil removal, groundwater contamination) could be taxed differently. We are on track to improving the TDR program, which is an important tool for farmland preservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Town should create goals aimed toward farmland preservation for food security.</li></ul>
John Cullen	Northville	TDR	Providing money for a drive thru (through TDR) sounds like a bribe. Use TDR benefits for giant buildings coming up in this town. I hope the farmland property that one developer is buying up stays farmland and doesn't become residential. He wants to build a boutique hotel on one of his properties in Southold.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Town should pass policies aimed at keeping farmland that is getting purchased as farmland.</li></ul>
Frank Beyrodt	Town of Riverhead Councilman	Farming	Anyone in business of farming had to make an investment in the land. The investment was needed to make a living. We don't know what crops will be successful or what the future holds. We need to work with the farming community if we expect farming to go forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Town should work with the farming community to ensure that farming remains economically viable.</li></ul>
Unknown		Farming; TDR; agritourism	Farming is hard. We need the master plan to address specific things such as what Rob Carpenter proposed. The 2003 Master Plan is a little vague; we love preservation but farming is hard. We need the master plan to protect the farmer (e.g., water on the road, solar-visual issue - there's not a lot of down sides to solar compared with the alternatives [e.g., strip mall]). With TDRs, let's see the environmental review get rolled into the master plan review. The plan should address agritourism in a positive way; there's no need to limit the numbers of animals, for example. This will protect against future zoning or legislative changes. The Plan should be specific and positive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The plan should include specific protections for farmers.</li><li>• The plan should address agritourism in a positive way.</li></ul>

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Mike Foley	Reeves Park resident; South Park Heights Civic Association	Recreational cannabis; noise; TDR, drainage; solar; scenic corridors	Marijuana - there are rules that make it difficult for growers to understand what they can and cannot do. You have to pay cash for cannabis since it's illegal under federal law. The product is limited to that state; you can export surplus to another state (CA, CO cannot cross state lines with their crop and are sitting on surplus). Don't saturate the market. Don't put a wedding reception on your farm. We are looking to limit noise. Purchasing TDRs for drive through is not a bribe. Rob Carpenter has well thought out points; flooding is not the farmers' problem. This needs to be addressed in the master plan and proper drainage put in. Solar as form of preservation is questionable. Solar should not hinder our scenic corridors. Tree replacement using local trees is a great idea. Ag housing for workers is a great idea. We need to give credit to farmers that are housing their J1 and H2A workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Master Plan should prohibit weddings, catering halls, and amplified music on farmland.</li></ul>
Bob Kern	Councilman Elect	Solarvoltaics	Is the Town considering solar voltaics? Solar companies and agriculture need to study to ensure viability. We have preserved land; we need Ag worker housing - can we put Ag worker housing on some of that preserved land. Some smaller operations have no room for Ag worker housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The plan should address agrivoltaics.</li></ul>
Rob Carpenter	LI Farm Bureau	Ag worker housing	There are different levels of preservation; it would have to be on Riverhead preserved land. The Town doesn't have control over County, State, or private preserved lands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Town may continue to allow for agricultural worker housing on its preserved lands.</li></ul>
Frank Beyrodt	Town of Riverhead Councilman	Ag worker housing	It is common for a small portion of the farm to be dedicated to Ag worker housing as part of subdivision review process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Town should continue to allow for a small portion of the farm to be dedicated to agriculture worker housing as part of its subdivision review process.</li></ul>