

**PUBLIC HEARING
ON INCLUSION IN THE AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT
HELD BY THE
PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE
IN THE
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Tuesday July 1, 2025 6:45 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 6:46 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who requested Legislator Montgomery to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Montgomery, Gouldman, Russo, Ellner, Jonke, Crowley and Chairwoman Sayegh were present. Legislators Addonizio and Birmingham were absent.

Chairwoman Sayegh requested the Clerk read the Public Notice:

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to Article 25-AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law of the State of New York, Section 303-b, that one or more requests have been received by the Putnam County Legislature for inclusion of predominately viable agricultural land within Putnam County's certified Agricultural District.

FURTHER NOTICE is hereby given that the Putnam County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board has considered the requests for inclusion and reported which parcels for inclusion would serve the public interest by assisting in maintaining a viable agricultural industry within the District.

FURTHER NOTICE is hereby given that the parcels requested for inclusion are:

Town of Kent:

Bowen Farm, LLC. (Robert Rudemyer, Jr.) – Tax Map #12.-3-71 (26.73 acres) Tax Map #22.-1-15 (40.00 acres) Total Acreage: 66.73 (the 40 acre parcel is rented and already in the Agricultural District)

Town of Patterson:

Lobster Hill Farm (Jessica & Andrew Jarrett) – Tax Map #35.-4-56 (22.49 acres) Total Acreage 22.49

Mother & Daughter Farm (Peter Clarke & Martha Cotto) – Tax Map #34.-3-1.41 (15.50 acres) Total Acreage 15.50

Town of Putnam Valley:

Big Red Barn Farm (Joey Mancuso) – Tax Map #72.16-1-1 (67.05 acres) Total Acreage: 67.05

Clara Patunga Farm (Olivia & Andrew Wulkan) – Tax Map #72.12-1-6 (1.70 acres) Total Acreage 1.70

Cucumber Hill Farm (Justin Baker) – Tax Map #84.-2-41 (28.85 acres) Total Acreage 28.85

The Rush Family Farm (Francis W. Rush III) - Tax Map #83.20-1-6 (33.00 acres) Total Acreage: 33.00

Town of Southeast:

Artemis Farm (Christophe Landon) – Tax Map #57.-2-47 (71.56 acres) Tax Map #57.-3-17 (68.403 acres - this parcel does not exist and was not included in total acreage) and Tax Map #57.-2-46.1 (67.26 acres) Total Acreage 138.82 (other two (2) parcels are already in Agricultural District)

Barndog LLC (Wendy Janesky) – Tax Map #80.1-3.1 (28.01 acres) Tax Map #80.-1-3.2 (32.48 acres) Tax Map #80.-1-3.3 (5.00 acres) Total Acreage 65.49

Lobster Hill Farm (Jessica & Andrew Jarrett) – Tax Map #35.-1-10 (56.13 acres) Total Acreage: 56.13

Reinmaker Farm (Harold Lepler) – Tax Map #58.-1-34.2 (107.50 acres) Total Acreage: 107.50

White Oak Apiary (Michael Bruen) – Tax Map #57.-2-46.2 (1.14 acres) Total Acreage: 1.14

Total acreage in petitions: 604.40

FURTHER NOTICE is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be held on Tuesday, July 1, 2025 at 6:45 P.M. in the Historic Courthouse, Carmel, New York, to consider these requests for inclusion and the recommendations of the Putnam County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board and the Physical Services Committee.

BY ORDER OF THE PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Diane Schonfeld

Clerk

Chairwoman Sayegh read the procedure for making comments at the Public Hearing. She requested that anyone wishing to speak should come up to the microphone, state their name and the town in which they reside. She stated there will be no cross discussion with the members of the Legislature. She stated Legislators will have their opportunity to discuss the applications, before voting on them, at the Full Legislative Meeting following this hearing. She stated if any members of the public have a question, they may leave their name and contact information with the Clerk.

Christine Nastasi, Chair of the Putnam County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, stated she wanted to make the Legislature aware that according to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets the use of the term “startup farm” is used to determine whether a farm may be eligible for protections under the Agriculture and Markets Law. She stated she sent Legislator Ellner a highlighted form of the definitions and within this form the term “startup farm” is not listed. She stated farms that are requesting to be admitted to the Putnam Agricultural District as commercial boarding facilities must have 10 horses within the calendar year and a minimum of 7 acres. She stated Reinmaker Farm is applying as a real farm and there was no infrastructure or

horses on the farm when the site visit occurred. She stated the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board voted no for this farm's admittance to the Putnam Agricultural District. She stated for Barn Dog LLC there are two different farms, Barn Dog and Barn Dog 2. She stated Barn Dog 2 is a separate LLC from Barn Dog. She stated even though they have the same principle, they are 2 separate entities. She stated the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board voted on Barn Dog not Barn Dog 2. She stated Barn Dog did not have horses on the property, they had most of the buildings completed, and in their application they stated they would be ready for occupation by the end of this summer. She reiterated there were no horses on the farm and also no paddocks were built. She stated this was the only vote that was not unanimous and there was some discussion about including Barn Dog in the Agricultural District.

Jamie Spillane, from the Law Office of Hogan, Rossi & Liguori, stated she is an attorney representing Barn Dog LLC and Reinmaker Farm. She stated that with Barn Dog LLC, Chistine Nastasi mentioned there was not a unanimous vote, however, the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board did vote to include Barn Dog LLC in the Agricultural District. She added the Physical Services Committee also voted to include Barn Dog LLC in the Agricultural District. She stated there is substantial completion of a 42-stall barn on the property as well as a haying operation that meets the income requirements which allows the farm to be included in the District even without the 42-stall barn being up and running. She stated that the owner of this property owns two (2) other farms in Putnam County and also owns a parcel in Dutchess County that is a part of an agricultural district. She stated the operation includes commercial boarding and haying. She explained how a startup operation can be included in the Agricultural District and how there are protections for startup operations. She stated the purpose of the ownership being in a separate LLC is purely for liability reasons. She stated the Legislature must review every startup operation on an independent basis. She stated she understands Reinmaker Farm was not recommended by the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, however, this is essentially a new property being added to an active farm. She stated they have footings installed and the operation is going to be up and running in a couple of months. She stated there was a breeding contract submitted in the application to show the operation has never ceased since moving to this property. She stated the applicant has already obtained the necessary permits and has done everything that is required to continue this active farm operation and there are no violations on the farm.

Lynne Eckardt, Resident of Brewster, stated Barn Dog Farm went through the Town of Southeast Planning Board and Reinmaker Farm has not. She stated she understands that Reinmaker has been operating for a long time, however, she believed that a precedent is set when you approve something prior to it being built which she believed was not a good idea. She stated with White Oak Apiary it resides on 1.14 acres, and she believes there is another parcel in town, however, she is unsure whether it is owned by the same person. She expressed her concern about letting properties that are under the 7-acre minimum into the Agricultural District which would then set a precedent. She was hoping those that get into the District will be an asset to the whole community.

Crystal Stowell, Resident of Putnam Valley, Vice President of the Putnam Valley Grange, stated two (2) weeks ago she discussed with the Legislature the importance of startups being included in the Agricultural District. She stated she specifically spoke about the inclusion of Clara Patunga Farm. She explained that there are two (2) factors that determine the admittance of a farm into the Agricultural District. She explained the two (2) factors; whether the land consists predominantly of viable Agricultural land and

whether its inclusion would serve the public interest. She explained why she believed Clara Patunga Farm meets both of these criteria and should undeniably be included in the Agricultural District. She stated the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets has provisions for the assessment of startup farm operations. She stated these provisions are expectations that grant farms a reasonable time period to allow them to establish their operation. She explained that for apiaries there is a recommended 2-year startup period and for orchards and berries it is a 3 to 5-year period. She stated all emerging farms would benefit from the inclusion to the Agricultural District because of the protections given by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Law. She explained that the guidance documents contain other factors that should be considered when assessing a startup farm such as the landowner's intent, the time and effort spent on farming, and whether the landowner has the knowledge to build a successful farming business. She stated the owner of Clara Patunga Farm possesses a bachelor's degree in agriculture as well as has valuable farming experience from Green Chimney's Organic Farm. She explained that he has submitted a comprehensive business plan with his application, and she believed he was well equipped with the knowledge, training, experience, and determination to effectively execute his business strategy.

Andrew Jarrett, owner of Lobster Hill Farm in Brewster, stated they were in four (4) farmers markets last year selling their farm's meat and eggs, and three (3) out of the four (4) farmers markets were in Putnam County. He stated this year they are in a total of eight (8) farmers markets between Putnam County and Westchester County. He stated although he respects the towns' concerns about the noises and smells that come from farms, he believed there were ways they can address these issues. He thanked the Legislature and the Community and hoped they were able to see the importance of agriculture in Putnam County.

Ms. Nastasi stated she wanted to clarify that with White Oak Apiary, the owner Micheal Bruen owns land on Gage Road in Brewster, and this is where the majority of his product is held. She stated the property on Brewster Hill Road is considered an add on. She stated add ons are reviewed by the Agricultural District and they are also able to include. She stated with Reinmaker Farm's case, when he sold his property, he no longer had property in the Agricultural District, therefore, Reinmaker Farm's application is not considered an add on and this also applies to Barn Dog LLC.

Jamie Spillane, from the Law Office of Hogan, Rossi & Liguori, clarified the point made by Ms. Nastasi by saying that a farm operation can piggyback on another operation and she proceeded to explain how. She stated that in saying the ownership must be under the same name in order to qualify for admittance to the Agricultural District is inaccurate. She stated an owner can add on property and also be working in an ongoing farm operation with a different entity structure and still be able to apply for the Agricultural District as an operation that is existing and ongoing. She explained that there have been haying operations that lease land from various owners, and the property still qualified. She stated that you can work in conjunction with other farm operations in order to apply and qualify.

Jessica Jarrett, owner of Lobster Hill Farm in Brewster, stated there is a misconception on how the Agricultural District supports farms. She stated inclusion in the Agricultural District does not allow the farms to be exempt from zoning laws, building codes, or

anything that does not deal with farming. She stated it only protects sound farming practices.

Frank Rush, owner of Rush Family Farm in Putnam Valley, thanked the Legislature and the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board.

Brett Yarris, Resident of Carmel Hamlet, stated the Legislature has an important decision to make. He stated the reason for the existence of the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board is to serve as an advisory body. He stated the Legislature can utilize this board's information and advice to determine what farms they should approve.

There being no further comments; at 7:23 P.M., Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Schonfeld, Clerk.