

**SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE
CALLED BY THE CLERK AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHAIRWOMAN
HELD IN ROOM #318 OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Monday **August 25, 2025**

(Immediately following Eco, Rules, Audit & Special Physical Mtgs. starting @ 5:30 P.M.)

The meeting was called to order at 8:21 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who requested that Legislator Birmingham lead in the Pledge of Allegiance and Legislator Ellner lead in the Legislative Prayer. Upon roll call, Legislators Gouldman, Russo, Ellner, Jonke, Birmingham, Crowley and Chairwoman Sayegh were present. Legislators Gouldman and Addonizio were absent.

Item #4 – Approval – SEQR – Agricultural District was next. Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following; seconded by Legislator Birmingham.

Legislator Ellner questioned if we should approve this pending the outcome of the next item.

Legislator Birmingham stated he would defer to the Law Department. He stated that we must approve this first in order to take any action. He stated that under the Environmental Conservation Law we must adopt a SEQR resolution. He stated that the next item would be considered an action.

Senior Deputy County Attorney Heather Abissi concurred. It needed to be done first in order to authorize us to vote on the next item.

Chairwoman Sayegh clarified that even if the next item may or may not pass, we still need to vote on this first.

Senior Deputy County Attorney Heather Abissi said, “yes.”

RESOLUTION #209

APPROVAL – SEQR - AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture and Markets as Lead Agency for the Agricultural Districts Program has conducted a programmatic review of the environmental effects of Agricultural Districts and has concluded that there is little likelihood of significant adverse environmental impact resulting from the formation or modification of such districts; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the County to review the site-specific proposals under consideration to determine if unique circumstances exist which increase the likelihood of environmental significance; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture and Markets recommends that the County Legislative body serve as the Lead Agency to ensure compliance with the requirement of the State Environmental Quality Review Act as it is the only other agency required to undertake an action except for the Department of Agriculture and Markets; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Putnam County Legislature declares itself to be the lead agency to ensure compliance with the requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review Act; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Putnam County Legislature, as Lead Agency, hereby determines that the site-specific parcels contained in the proposed Agriculture District modifications will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment and that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Putnam County Legislature, as lead agency, hereby accepts and adopts the Negative Declaration prepared in connection with the proposed Agriculture District modifications, a copy of which is annexed hereto and made a part hereof.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. LEGISLATORS ADDONIZIO & MONTGOMERY WERE ABSENT. MOTION CARRIES.

Item #5 – Approval – Stipulation – Inclusion of Parcel in Putnam County Agricultural District (Reinmaker Farm East LLC) was next.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move the following; seconded by Legislator Birmingham.

Legislator Birmingham stated that he was not present at the July Full meeting when this was first voted on. He stated that he reviewed the tape, application, and Committee meeting minutes and video of the action. He stated that he heard it said tonight that this year things have been a bit truncated because of litigation, and he would not speak specifically about the application itself but would speak on the specific matter in front of us tonight which is the settlement of litigation. He stated that he has been working on and off with the County since 1988. He referenced different positions he held during that time period and stated that he has seen our County Law Department both recommend that the Legislature settle some litigation matters, or they advocate that we move forward with litigation matters. He stated that in each case he cannot recall one (1) instance, especially with respect to the settling of litigation, that we have gone against the advice of our County Attorney. He stated that it is in that vein that he would be supporting this resolution. He stated that the Law Department is here to protect us and the County taxpayers. Having said that he heard what individuals have said and he believes that we do need to get the Agricultural District caught up to speed. He looked forward to working with the members of the community to see if we can make the process better from a Legislative standpoint.

Legislator Jonke stated that he voted for inclusion at the July Full meeting. He stated that tonight we are asked to approve a stipulation that is recommended by the Law Department. He stated that he was inclined to follow Counsel's advice to settle the litigation.

Legislator Ellner stated that a few years ago when this whole situation occurred with the Agricultural Board, he was given advice by the Law Department. He stated that he was sorry that he followed that advice. He believed that if he did not follow that advice we would not be here right now. He believed that a lot of this would have been eliminated if simple meetings could have taken place to allow individuals to have civil discussions.

Legislator Crowley stated that we watched last year many of the other farms getting denied. She stated that she is the liaison to the Agricultural Board, and she did not want people to spend money. She wanted the process to work the right way, being transparent. She believed that we needed to do better in outlining the process and that we understand every application as it comes before us to take a vote so that we do not end up here every single year. She believed it was not fair to the farmers, taxpayers, or any of us. She believed mistakes were made in the past and this year, and now we are correcting them. She did not know if it is always in the best manner. She explained that the County Attorney had given us advice and although she was having a hard time with this, she believed that we needed to move forward and do better.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated that she struggles with this as well. She believed that the Agricultural Board did a great job this year and she supported their decision. She stated that from what she understands from the Law Department there was a misunderstanding of when the startup of the farm begins, which she is still not clear on. She believed that as a startup you had to be in business for at least two (2) years to be considered for inclusion in the Agricultural District. She stated she must also take the advice of the Law Department.

RESOLUTION #210

APPROVAL – STIPULATION – INCLUSION OF PARCEL IN PUTNAM COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT (Reinmaker Farm East LLC)

WHEREAS, by Resolution #81 of 2003, the Putnam County Legislature created an Agricultural District in the County of Putnam; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution #193 of 2011, after the 8th year anniversary of the formation of the Putnam County Agricultural District, the Putnam County Legislature modified said Putnam County Agricultural District No. 1; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution #244 of 2003, the Putnam County Legislature established the month of November in which a landowner may request inclusion in the Putnam County Agricultural District; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution #154 of 2015, the Putnam County Legislature changed the annual thirty-day inclusion request period, from the month of November to April 1st through April 30th, commencing in the year 2016 and each year thereafter; and

WHEREAS, November 19, 2019 marked the second 8-Year Anniversary of the formation of the Putnam County Agricultural District requiring the Putnam County Legislature to review this district and either continue, terminate or modify the district created; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution #204 of 2019, the Putnam County Legislature determined that the Putnam County Agricultural District No. 1 remained the same in accordance with the recommendations of the Putnam County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board to consist of 157 parcels with a total acreage of 5,113.9 acres; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution #185 of 2025, the Putnam County Legislature considered applications to include parcels into the Putnam County Agricultural District; and

WHEREAS, included in the applications presented to the Putnam County Legislature in 2025 to modify the existing Agricultural District in the County of Putnam was a request to include the following parcel in the Putnam County Agricultural District (the "Parcel"):

Town of Southeast:

Reinmaker Farm East LLC - Tax Map #58.-1-34.2 (107.50 acres) Total Acreage: 107.50 ; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 185 of 2025, the Putnam County Legislature voted to exclude Reinmaker Farm East LLC from the Putnam County Agricultural District; and

WHEREAS, Reinmaker Farm East LLC commenced an Article 78 Proceeding in Supreme Court Putnam County challenging the action of the Putnam County Legislature in excluding the Reinmaker Farm East LLC Parcel from the Putnam County Agricultural District; and

WHEREAS, by Stipulation, dated August 25, 2025, Reinmaker Farm East LLC and the County of Putnam and the Putnam County Legislature stipulated and agreed that the Putnam County Legislature would vacate and annul its prior determination in Resolution #185, dated July 7, 2025, denying Reinmaker Farm East LLC's application and include the Parcel in the Putnam County Agricultural District in accordance with Article 25-AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, the Putnam County Legislature hereby vacates and annuls its prior determination in Resolution #185, dated July 7, 2025, denying Reinmaker Farm East LLC's application to include the Parcel in the Putnam County Agricultural District and hereby adopts the Parcel for inclusion in the Putnam County Agricultural District, to wit:

Town of Southeast:

Reinmaker Farm East LLC - Tax Map #58.-1-34.2 (107.50 acres) Total Acreage: 107.50

For a total of 107.50 acres.

BY ROLL CALL VOTE: FIVE AYES. TWO NAYS – LEGISLATORS ELLNER & RUSSO. LEGISLATORS ADDONIZIO & MONTGOMERY WERE ABSENT. MOTION CARRIES.

Legislator Crowley asked if she could make a motion to reconsider another farm that was not considered for inclusion.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated that we were only voting on the litigation matter. She stated that she could not make that motion at a Special Full meeting.

Senior Deputy County Attorney Heather Abissi concurred with Chairwoman Sayegh.

There being no further business, at 8:34 P.M. Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Schonfeld, Clerk.