

# Rules of Procedure for the Town of Ithaca Agriculture Committee

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Town of Ithaca Agriculture Committee (hereafter “Agriculture Committee”) shall be

To advise the Town of Ithaca Town Board (hereafter “Town Board”) regarding agricultural policy in the Town

To review and suggest updates to the Town's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan; in particular, to assist with or take the lead in developing recommendations relating to areas assigned to the Agriculture Committee in the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

To serve as a clearinghouse for relations between farm operations in the Town of Ithaca and the Town's Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Board, Planning Department, Code Enforcement, and other agencies of Town Government

To provide a forum for concerns about Town policy, Town operations, or other matters relating to farming in the Town for possible referral to the Town Board

To conduct research into farm-related subjects that may result in policy recommendations to the Town Board

To provide input for annual additions to the County Agricultural Districts and input to the eight-year review of County Agricultural Districts

To provide educational resources for sharing information among farmers and to educate Town residents and officials about farming and farmland

To undertake other appropriate tasks requested by the Town Board.

## 2. Membership

### 2.1 Organizational membership

The member organizations of the Town of Ithaca Agriculture Committee are farm operations in the Town of Ithaca appointed by the Town of Ithaca Town Board. *Farm operation* means a commercial enterprise located in the Town of Ithaca that engages in the production, preparation, or marketing of fruit; vegetables; field crops; nursery stock or flowers; livestock or livestock products, including commercial horse boarding and breeding operations; Christmas tree farming; timber processing; the production of compost, mulch, or other biomass crops; and the management and harvesting of farm woodlands.

## **2.2 Adding or removing member organizations**

Following creation of the Agriculture Committee, member organizations shall be added or removed only by resolution of the Town Board or by withdrawal tendered in writing from the designated contact to the chair of the Agriculture Committee.

## **2.3 Designated contacts**

A person from each member organization shall be appointed by the Town Board as the designated contact person for that organization. Following creation of the Agriculture Committee, the designated contact for a member organization shall be reassigned only by resolution of the Town Board.

## **2.4 Member representatives**

Member organizations of the Agriculture Committee shall be represented at meetings by one or more persons designated by the contact person for each member organization. Representatives need not be the same for every meeting. Each member organization shall have no more than one vote regardless of the number of representatives it sends to meetings. No person shall represent more than one organization during any single meeting. All votes shall be advisory in nature.

## **2.5 Associate members**

The Town Board may, in addition to the organizational members of the Agriculture Committee, appoint one or two citizens interested in local agriculture or local food production to serve as associate members of the Committee. Associate members may participate fully in the activities of the Committee but shall not have a vote in any decision of the Committee.

## **2.6 Liaisons**

The Town of Ithaca Town Board, the Town of Ithaca Planning Board, the Town of Ithaca Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Town of Ithaca Conservation Board may each appoint one of their members to serve as a liaison to the Agriculture Committee. The appointment of liaisons shall also be solicited from Cornell University agricultural operations and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Liaisons may participate fully in the activities of the Committee but shall not have a vote in any decision of the Committee.

## **2.7 Staff support**

The Town of Ithaca Planning Department may assign one or more members of its staff to support the business of the Agriculture Committee. Support may include, but not be limited to, attending meetings of the Committee; preparation of meeting minutes based upon collation and review of meeting notes; ensuring that meeting minutes and other materials produced by the Committee for public consumption are published on the Town website; and reviewing progress achieved regarding the items delegated to the Committee by the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and reporting on the same at the annual community meeting of the Committee and to the Town Board. Assigned staff need not be the same for every meeting, and notwithstanding the requirement for staff support, a meeting of the Committee shall not be considered invalid due to lack of staff attendance.

### **3. Procedure**

#### **3.1 Chair and vice-chair**

The chair and vice-chair of the Agriculture Committee shall appointed by the Town Board, after giving the Agriculture Committee the opportunity to make a recommendation. Terms of office shall expire on December 31. The chair and vice-chair shall have no vote independent of their status as a representative of a member organization. If the chair is unable to attend a meeting, the vice-chair shall serve in his or her stead; if both are unable to attend a meeting, a chair pro tem shall be elected by the voting member organizations attending the meeting to serve for the duration of the meeting. The chair shall consult with Town staff in setting agendas but shall not be bound by decisions of the staff in choosing agenda items.

#### **3.2 Voting status**

To promote continuity of participation, member organizations shall gain or lose voting status depending upon their meeting attendance as follows:

- a. Every member organization shall attain voting status upon appointment by the Town Board.
- b. A member organization shall lose its voting status following the third unexcused consecutive meeting in which it has not participated by sending a representative. An unexcused absence means not contacting the chair, vice-chair or Town Planning Department prior to the scheduled meeting.
- c. A member organization that has lost its voting status shall regain voting status following the second consecutive meeting in which it has participated by sending a representative.

#### **3.3 Committee mail list**

The Town shall provide an electronic mail list for use of the Committee. Subscribers to the mail list shall be the Designated Contacts for the member organizations (one per organization).

#### **3.4 Meetings**

The Agriculture Committee shall regularly meet at least four times in each calendar year. Meetings shall be scheduled in advance by the members. All meetings shall be open to visitors from the public. Meetings shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order Revised* regarding the operation of committees, insofar as such rules are not inconsistent with or in conflict with this enabling document, with other policies adopted by the Town Board, or with provisions of law. Except as specified in Section 3.7, "Quorum," a member must have voting rights to make or second a motion.

#### **3.5 Annual community meeting**

The Agriculture Committee shall hold at least one meeting a year to which all members of the local farming community are invited to attend as guests.

### **3.6 Sessions**

A session of the Agriculture Committee shall be defined as the period beginning at the start of the annual community meeting and extending to the start of the following annual community meeting.

### **3.7 Quorum**

A quorum of the Agriculture Committee shall consist of representatives from a number of voting member organizations greater than half the total number of voting member organizations. In the absence of a quorum, participants at a meeting may engage in informal discussion, but they may not conduct any formal business with the exception of setting a time and date for the next meeting and adjourning to the date set. Meetings without quorum shall still count towards attendance for purposes of gaining, maintaining, or losing voting rights.

### **3.8 Other Procedures**

The Town Board shall adopt the Rules of Procedures for the Agriculture Committee, including any future amendments, after giving the Agriculture Committee the opportunity to make a recommendation.