

March 23, 2021

Craig Clark
Executive Director
Allegany County IDA
6087 NYS Route 19 N
Belmont, NY 14813

Re: Great Lakes Cheese Public Hearing Comments

Dear Dr. Clark:

I listened in to the comments made at the Public Hearing on the Great Lakes Cheese project proposed for the area near I-86, NYS 19 and CR 20. The Attorney for the land owners made comments related to the Comprehensive Plans for the Town of Angelica and Town of Amity. Some of the characterizations made did not align with my recollection of working with these entities. In general, virtually all Comprehensive Plans in rural communities are required to make some basic analysis of Agriculture and discuss it in their plans per New York State law. The sections read by the Attorney call out these sections specifically during their comments.

Town of Angelica Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Angelica worked on their plan with the Village of Angelica in 2006 and completed it in 2007. At that time the majority of the thinking and effort was related to the area directly around the Village. The Great Lakes Cheese site location for a wastewater treatment plant is a very small part of the Town of Angelica and really wasn't a concern in the greater good of Agriculture. Just to the east of the Genesee River are numerous agricultural lands and also east of the Village along CR 16 there are significant stretches of agricultural lands. Neither the Village of Angelica nor the Town of Angelica has Zoning laws; they have limited ability to control what goes on in their municipalities for use.

The three strategies that were read by the attorney from the Comprehensive Plan were:

- Consider land use regulations that protect and promote farming, modeled after those at the County level.
- Research the feasibility of a conservation easement program to provide tax relief to large landowners and farms.
- Support local farmers and encourage agri-tourism by establishing a Farmers' Market in Park Circle.

As of this writing the Town has not moved forward with land use controls. The establishment of the Farmer's market came to fruition shortly after the plan was created and has been running for at least 12 years now.

At the time the Plan was developed this was not an area of major discussion. If it had been it would likely have been specifically called out in their plan. In searching the document there does not appear to be reference to the Exit 30 area of I-86.

Town of Amity Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Amity undertook their first Comprehensive Plan in 2008 with approval coming in 2009. The Town then did an update that was approved in 2015.

Allegany County started discussing development in the late 1990's. After that, various plans for the parcels near Exit 30 from I-86 had been drawn up that included parts of the land east of NYS 19 and west of the Genesee River. The property owner was in discussion at various times on different pieces of these properties and the former IDA Director for potential development on these sites. These development plans were known by the time of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan development.

The 2015 plan, under the "Agriculture section" specifically designates the area near I-86 and NYS 19 as being an area for development. The properties being discussed are directly off the I-86 Exit 30 less than ¼ mile from the exit ramps. The parcels that are under discussion are actually bisected by the Interstate. The language that was read stated:

"Public comment for the original edition of this comprehensive plan trended toward keeping the agricultural lands in use for that same purpose. The issue that confronts the Town of Amity, however, is that the best farmlands are also considered the best areas for future development. The area near the intersection of NY State Route 19 and I-86 is presently in agricultural use; yet most people understand that this location is likely to be the next area of growth in the County. The remainder of the lands that border the Genesee River / NY State Route 19 corridor should be carefully planned to allow a mixed use of mostly agriculture with a narrow corridor for development directly along NY State Route 19. No other large tracts should be taken out of farm use for development."

The areas discussed for retaining agriculture are not these parcels being considered by Great Lakes Cheese but are to the south of Van Campen Creek/WNYPA RR line continuing to the Village of Belmont as well as the properties along NYS Route 19 south of the Village of Belmont extending to the Town of Scio line.

The Town of Amity Plan goes on to call out specifically the area around Belvidere [also nicknamed the Crossroads] in Section V. A. 3. Belvidere as one of the Town's three areas of focus for Areas of Development. This has essentially been called out as the area designated area for growth in the future in this plan. As the Town has no Zoning law they have limited ability to control what goes on in their municipalities for use. They have since passed a Site Plan Review Law that will allow them an opportunity to look at the proposed site plan and have some input in certain aspects of the layout.

I hope that this clarifies that this area appears to be supported by the Town of Amity Comprehensive Plan for development.

Sincerely,



H. KIER DIRLAM
Director of Planning