

Andrew J. Spano
County Executive

Department of Planning

Gerard E. Mulligan
Commissioner

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

May 5, 2004

Dear Chief Elected Municipal Official:

I am writing to advise you that the Westchester County Board of Legislators recently approved legislation that will allow landowners to petition to join the Westchester County Agricultural District. In 2004, interested landowners may only apply to the County Board during the month of May. In future years, applications will be accepted during the month of January.

At the County's request, the New York State Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets approved the establishment of Westchester County Agricultural District No. 1 in 2001. Subsequently, the state legislature adopted a new Section 303-b of the Agriculture and Markets Law that requires counties in which certified Agricultural Districts are located to designate an annual thirty-day period within which a landowner may submit, prior to the established review period (2009 in Westchester County), a request for inclusion of land that is predominantly "viable agricultural land."

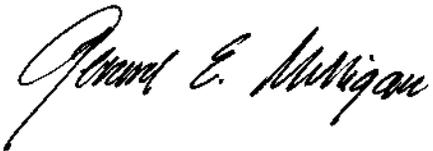
Applications will be reviewed by the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, which will send recommendations to the Board of Legislators. The County Board will hold public hearings on the inclusion of properties in the District. If the Board determines that certain properties should be included in the District, they will submit a resolution to the State Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets, which has final approval authority over parcels to be included in the District. An application form and fact sheet are enclosed.

The Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board has also been working with the Department of Planning to prepare an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. A draft of the Plan has been completed, and a public information meeting will be held on May 18 in Mount Kisco. After the public information meeting, the County Board of Legislators will consider adoption of the Plan, which will then be forwarded to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets for their review and approval. Please find enclosed an agriculture fact sheet, an announcement of the public information meeting, and the Executive Summary from the Plan. You may contact the Planning Department for a full copy of the Plan, available electronically.

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If you are interested in learning more about the Westchester County Agricultural District or would like more information about the process of joining the District, please contact David Kvinge, Director of Environmental Planning at 995-2089 or dsk2@westchestergov.com. For more information on agriculture in Westchester County and the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, please visit our web site at www.westchestergov.com/planning and follow the Environmental Planning link.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerard E. Mulligan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Gerard E. Mulligan, AICP
Commissioner

Enclosures (5)

cc: Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board
Andrew Neuman, Assistant to the County Executive
David Kvinge, Director of Environmental Planning