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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
MUNICIPAL AGRICULTURAL & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN**

July 7, 2010

BACKGROUND

The Town of Clarence has been awarded a grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets for the development of a Municipal Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan pursuant to Article 25-AAA of the Agriculture and Markets Law and 1NYCRR Part 390.

The Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan will be prepared under the oversight of the Town of Clarence Office of Planning and Zoning and Town Board. A Farmland Protection Committee will be established to provide direction to the consultant. The Office of Planning and Zoning will be able to offer the current inventory of GIS based maps and capabilities and will work with the consultant to expand upon that inventory to be inclusive of agricultural and farmland protection considerations. The Town of Clarence currently has an open space and land conservation program locally known as the Greenprint program. The Farmland Protection plan is intended to strengthen the current Greenprint program and provide recommendations and implementation strategies specifically for farmland protection and agricultural economic development. Other agencies expected to participate in the development of the Plan include the Erie County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, the Erie County Farm Bureau, the Western New York Land Conservancy, The Recreation Advisory Committee of the Town of Clarence, and the Conservation Advisory Committee of the Town of Clarence.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Plan is expected, at a minimum, to contain the following elements:

A. Facilitate Public Participation

In addition to the public hearing required by the grant, the following actions will be taken:

- 1) A Farmland Protection Committee will be established to provide direction to the consultant throughout the duration of this project.
- 2) A public informational meeting will be held early in the planning process to present an overview of the planning process. The purpose of this meeting is to provide information to the public regarding the purpose of the plan and the range of preservation techniques that may be considered.

- 3) A series of outreach meetings will be held with farmers and farmland owners to identify issues and concerns and to discuss potential strategies for the retention of farmland and support of the agricultural economy. Invitations to participate will be issued to all owners of land classified as farmland according to tax parcel assessment data and all landowners who receive agricultural use value assessments.
- 4) Meetings will be conducted with key stakeholders who are familiar with issues facing agriculture and farmland in the Town of Clarence and the region.
- 5) The Town, Planning and Zoning Boards will receive regular updates on the progress of the project.

B. Inventory farms, farmland resources and agribusiness operations within the Town

All agricultural land in the Town will be inventoried. For each parcel of farmland, the inventory will identify the ownership, crops, and soil types; whether the land is farmer-owned, rented by a farmer-friendly owner, rented from an owner with an intention to develop; the farm operation it is associated with and whether other significant natural, scenic, historic or archeological resources are located on the property. The information collected will be compiled into a database to assist the Town in identifying parcels suitable for the purchase of development rights or other protection programs and to facilitate future updates.

The consultant, in conjunction with staff from the Town of Clarence Planning Department, will incorporate the information collected into a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) based map and database. The Town of Clarence Planning department will provide GIS-based data and will prepare maps. The consultant will provide the finished GIS maps and database to the Town.

C. Analyze Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT Analysis)

A SWOT analysis, based on findings from the roundtable discussions, stakeholder meetings and inventory, will identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats relating to agriculture and farmland in the Town of Clarence. This analysis should include elements related to the local agricultural economy and its relationship to the larger regional agricultural economy.

Document changes in agricultural operations over the past 5 – 10 years. Work with the Farmland Protection Committee to develop a future trends analysis. Describe the type of development pressures in Clarence. Identify development inducing factors. Prepare a build out analysis – based on the Town of Clarence current Agricultural Zoning Districts; estimate the number of residential units or other non-agricultural units which could be built. Prepare a build out analysis of at least three current agricultural parcels to demonstrate, under current zoning requirements (setbacks, road frontage, minimum lot size, etc.), how the parcel would have to be subdivided. Assess the impacts on the short and long term viability of agriculture on the parcel's remaining agricultural land and on surrounding agricultural land.

D. Document Agricultural Land Use

Identify areas where agriculture is to be the priority land use based upon the following criteria: 1) presence of significant agricultural soils, 2) retaining large blocks of agricultural land, 3) contribution of farmland to other Town natural, cultural, and open space priorities such as view shed protection, natural area conservation, watershed protection, etc.

E. Develop Preservation Strategies

The consultant will present information on various techniques that would support agriculture in the Town and protect or preserve farmland.

Based upon input from landowners, Town officials and other stakeholders, the consultant will recommend specific strategies that could be implemented by the Town to support agriculture and preserve or protect farmland.

For each of the recommended preservation techniques, the consultant will analyze the potential impacts on the Town's tax base, describe the administrative and legal requirements that may be associated with implementation, and project the effectiveness with regard to farmland preservation.

The consultant will work with the Town of Clarence Recreation Advisory Committee, Farmland Protection Committee and landowners to identify potential parcels for future Purchase of development Rights applications. Based upon information collected in the inventory, the consultant will identify those parcels or groups of parcels that would be most likely to receive funding for the purchase of development rights.

The consultant will develop specific marketing and farmer lease/ownership strategies for those properties the Town of Clarence currently owns and will potentially acquire because of agricultural value as a function of the Greenprint program and the Farmland Protection Plan. The marketing plan is to include considerations for identifying effective mediums for advertising acquired farmland, listing key advantages of the property as identified in the agricultural land use assessment within the property description, and the creation of an effective format for incorporating the inventoried parcels within the town web page. The consultant will provide a matrix for considering and interviewing potential farming interests to ensure that equal opportunity is provided to all interested parties.

F. Prepare an Implementation Plan

The consultant will work with the Farmland Protection Committee to identify the specific implementation actions that would be required and to prepare an Implementation Plan that presents the recommended actions in a format that can easily be followed by Town officials, boards and committees. For each recommended action, the Implementation Plan will identify the entity that would have primary responsibility for implementation, the potential cost, possible funding sources, and the relative priority or timeframe for implementation.

The potential recommended actions will be discussed with farmers and landowners at one of the roundtable discussions to ensure that these actions will be acceptable to a majority of the Town's farmers and farmland owners.

G. Prepare Draft and Final Document

The consultant will prepare a draft Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan that incorporates the information and analysis identified in the aforementioned tasks. The draft Plan will be made available for public review prior to a public hearing. The consultant, in association with the Office of Planning and Zoning, will be required to provide two separate informational and educational

meetings with the Recreation Advisory Committee and Town Board to allow for a question and answer dialogue regarding the work completed, core components of the plan, and key implementation strategies of the plan proposals.

Based on public comments and input from the Farmland Protection Committee, a final draft will be prepared for adoption (if deemed appropriate) by the Town Board.

H. Conduct Public Hearing

The Town will conduct a public hearing on the draft Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. The consultant will attend the public hearing to gather input which may be used to formulate revisions for the final draft plan.

SCHEDULE

The consultant's work is projected to begin on or about October 1, 2010 and to be completed by October 31, 2011.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

All responses to this Request for Proposals shall, at a minimum, include the following:

- Scope of services and approach and methodology for accomplishing the scope of services
- Proposed project schedule
- Firm's expertise and experience
- Name(s) and resumes of key personnel to be involved in the project
- Total cost (not-to-exceed price) and payment schedule. (Note: payments should be tied to identified project milestones)

PROPOSAL CONDITIONS

The Plan shall satisfy all requirements of Article 25-AAA of the Agriculture and Markets Law and 1NYCRR Part 390.

Three copies of the proposal must be received by Wednesday, August 18th, 2010 and are to be addressed to:

Brad Packard, Assistant Director of Community Development
Office of Planning and Zoning
Town of Clarence
One Town Place
Clarence, NY 14031