TOWN OF STANFORD TOWN BOARD  
TOWN BOARD MINUTES

JUNE 12th, 2025

The Town of Stanford Town Board met for their monthly meeting on Thursday, June 12th, 2025, at the Town Hall at 7:03 PM. Supervisor Wendy Burton called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll call: Wendy Burton – present

Julia Descoteaux – absent

Eric Haims - present

Nathan Lavertue – absent

Theodore Secor - present

Also in attendance was Town Attorney Robert Butts.

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA: Supervisor Burton made a motion to approve the Agenda, seconded by Teddy Secor. Motion carried with all present voting in favor. Motion carried.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Councilman Secor reported that the May ZBA meeting only had a variance application for the construction of a carport at 15 Indian Trail. The June meeting was canceled as there were no applications received. For the Haunted Fortress, scenes and costumes were being discussed and there would be work groups every other Sunday from 10 AM to 3 PM, of which help was needed for everything, and all ages were welcome. Starting in September, these work details will be every Sunday. From the Climate Smart Community Task Force, they had discussed the Town’s draft local laws that were being considered by the Town Board, as well as the future of the Town. The Water Quality Committee will have one CSC member on it. They were also working on a contact list as well as an information campaign that may include urging residents to use clothes lines rather than dryers. The CAC also has about 6 compost bins left and could give them way at Community Day in September.

Supervisor Burton gave them Planning Board report as Councilman Eric Haims was unavailable to attend it: The Planning Board will be the lead agency for the SEQRA for Ben Rathjen’s project on Route 82; the Winnikee Land trust is working on a minor subdivision for a public preserve but will be splitting off a 5-acre parcel and home but the rest of the property will have a very steep area for parking; Rocky Reef subdivision is almost complete with a few minor details to be done and the escrow has been removed; a Special Use permit for the Millbrook School was discussed with their plans for a 10,372 sq. ft. boys dorm to be constructed and a public hearing for the project was set for June 25th; there was no other new information for the Sisters Hill property; and there were two pre-application conferences for two small bars, one for “Calahan’s Tavern” on Sam Holden’s property and one for a Bullis Hall Tavern.

From the Fire Company, Ms. Burton reported that they are in need of new pagers, that all the physicals have been done and they welcomed one new member. In the last month, they responded to 8 fire calls, 1 motor vehicle accident and 12 rescue calls.

From the Recreation Commission, since Councilman Nathan Lavertue was absent, Ms. Burton also reported that the camp was almost filled, and they had hired 39 people for the season; since the large tree down by the beach had to be removed they were looking into getting large shade umbrellas; 40 -50 people participated in the line dancing and the pond will open on June 21st.

Ms. Burton also gave a CAC report in Councilwoman Julia Descoteaux’s absence: that the CAC would be helping maintain the Buttercup Sanctuary since the Audubon Society only has only person maintain all of that property; and the Water Quality Committee was calling for people interested in having their water tested.

Supervisor Burton stated that the Town Board would be re-introducing the Right to Farm law that has since been “stripped” of all of its zoning matters and will be re-introducing the new version. On June 26th, The Board will hold a Special Meeting to get the public’s feedback on the Short-Term Rental law before it is officially re-introduced. These “informal workshops” will be to hear the public prior to future laws’ introductions to avoid “five iterations” of each law, but the Town is under time constraints for the short term rental law. They hoped to have an official Public Hearing in July and pass it in August. On Wednesday, June 18th, the CAC will have a presentation on the Natural Resource Inventory which will go the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals when finalized. Ms. Burton also thanked Lauren and Sara for getting the camp started for the first time and getting the Rec. opened early.

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PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Maeda Bloomberg, 91 Willowbrook Road – mentioned that “Stanford, A Caring Community” along with the D. C. Human Rights Commission was inviting everyone to their “100 Cups of Coffee” on Sunday, June 29th from 2 – 4 PM to discuss various items to make our Town better.

PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED LOCAL LAW #4 – RIGHT TO FARM

As this Public Hearing had been left open since the May 8th Town Board meeting, Wendy Burton made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Eric Haims, as the proposed new law had been slimmed down. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

1. PROPOSED LOCAL LAW #4 –RESOLUTION #6A - RIGHT TO FARM: Attorney Butts gave a synopsis of the new version of the law following several comments made at the May Town Board public hearing: zoning amendments were deferred to another time and this was now just s statement of policy; the proposed law declares that the right to farm is allowed by State law in any agricultural district, and it is not a nuisance, and confirms notice on any property sale adjoining or nearby; the Agricultural Advisory Committee was kept in as they can assist in dispute mediations rather than having to go through Ag and Markets in Albany; there will be four signs placed on the major roads leading in and out of Town.

**RESOLUTION NO. 6A OF 2025**

**INTRODUCTION OF LOCAL LAW NO. 4 FOR THE YEAR 2025**

**A LOCAL LAW ADDING CHAPTER 126 TO**

**CODIFY THE RIGHT TO FARM**

At a meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Stanford (“Town Board”), held at the Town of Stanford Town Hall on the 12th day of June, 2025, at 7:00 PM, Town Supervisor Wendy Burton called the meeting to order, and she, seconded by Councilperson, moved the following resolution pursuant to Section 20 of the Municipal Home Rule Law to introduce the following proposed local law, to be known as Proposed Local Law No. 4 of 2025, entitled “A Local Law Adding Chapter 126 of the Town Code to Codify the Right to Farm” as follows:

BE IT ENACTED by the Town Board of the Town of Stanford as follows:

**Section 1.** Right to Farm. A new chapter “**Chapter 126 – Right to Farm**”, shall be added to the Town Code as follows:

Chapter 126 - Right to Farm

§ 126-1. Title.

This chapter shall be known as the “Right to Farm Law of the Town of Stanford.”

§ 126-2. Legislative Intent.

The Town Board of the Town of Stanford hereby recognizes and declares the communal importance and pride associated with the local agricultural heritage. As proclaimed by George Washington, “Agriculture is the most healthful, most useful, and most noble employment of man.” The rich and beautiful farmlands of Stanford, New York generate viable economic benefits, fresh produce and commodities, environmental quality, and pastoral landscapes—thus defining the rural character of the Town.

It shall be the policy of the Town to preserve, protect, promote, and expand upon current and prospective Farming Operations, while fostering a harmonious relationship between farmers and neighboring residents. Said relationship includes the understanding and acceptance of day-to-day associated agriculture practices. Doing so with the intention of limiting the circumstances in which farming may be deemed a nuisance and be free of unreasonable and unwarranted interference.

The Town ensures that local laws are consistent with New York State Agriculture and Markets Law (Section 305-B) and New York State Town Law (Section 283-A), which requires an agricultural data statement for any application for a special use permit, site plan, use variance, or subdivision that occurs on property within an Agricultural District or within 500 feet of a Farm Operation located in an Agricultural District.

§ 126-3. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meaning indicated:

Agricultural District - A parcel of land which has received such designation under the requirements of agricultural district legislation of New York, Article 25-AA, Agricultural Districts, of the New York Agriculture and Markets Law.

Agricultural Practices - Those practices necessary for the on-farm production, preparation and marketing of agricultural commodities. Examples of such practices include, but are not limited to, operation of farm equipment, proper use of agricultural chemicals and other crop production methods, and construction and use of farm structures.

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Agricultural Products - Those products as defined in section 301(2) of Article 25AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law, including but not limited to:

Field crops, including corn, wheat, rye, barley, hay, potatoes and dry beans.

Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries and berries.

Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, carrots, beets and onions.

Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees and flowers.

Livestock and livestock products, including cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, horses, poultry, llamas, ratites, such as ostriches, emus, rheas and kiwis, farmed deer, farmed buffalo, fur bearing animals, milk and milk products, eggs, furs, and poultry products.

Maple sap and sugar products.

Christmas trees derived from a managed Christmas tree operation whether dug for transplanting or cut from the stump.

Aquaculture products, including fish, fish products, water plants and shellfish.

Short rotation woody crops raised for bioenergy.

Production and sale of woodland products, including but not limited to logs, lumber, posts and firewood.

Farm Operation - As defined in section 301 (11) in the State Agriculture and Markets Law.

Farmer - Any person, organization, entity, association, partnership, limited liability company, or corporation engaged in the business of agriculture, whether for profit or otherwise, including the cultivation of land, the raising of crops, or the raising of livestock.

Farmland - Land used in agricultural production, as defined in subdivision four of section 301 of Article 25AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law.

§ 126-4. Right-to-Farm Declaration.

Farmers, as well as those employed, retained, or otherwise authorized to act on behalf of Farmers, may lawfully engage in Agricultural Practices on property enrolled within a state-certified Agricultural District within this Town at all times and all such locations as are reasonably necessary to conduct the business of agriculture. For any Agricultural Practice, in determining the reasonableness of the time, place, and methodology of such practice, due weight and consideration shall be given to both traditional customs and procedures in the farming industry as well as to advances resulting from increased knowledge, research and improved technologies.

Agricultural Practices conducted on Farmland shall not be found to be a public or private nuisance if such Agricultural Practices are:

Reasonable and necessary to the particular farm or Farm Operation,

Conducted in a manner which is not negligent or reckless,

Conducted in conformity with generally accepted and sound Agricultural Practices,

Conducted in conformity with all local state, and federal laws and regulations,

Conducted in a manner which does not constitute a threat to public health and safety or cause injury to health or safety of any person, and

Conducted in a manner which does not reasonably obstruct the free passage or use of navigable waters or public roadways.

Nothing in this local law shall be construed to prohibit an aggrieved party from recovering from damages for bodily injury or wrongful death due to a failure to follow sound agricultural practice, as outlined in this section.

§ 126-5. Notification of Real Estate Buyers.

In order to promote harmony between Farmers and their neighbors, the Town requires land holders and/or their agents and assigns to comply with Section 310 of Article 25-AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law and provide notice to prospective purchasers and occupants as follows: "It is the policy of this state and this community to conserve, protect and encourage the development and improvement of agricultural land for the production of food, and other products and also for its natural and ecological value. This notice is to inform prospective residents that the property they are about to acquire lies partially or wholly within an Agricultural District and that farming activities occur within the district. Such farming activities may include, but not be limited to, activities that cause noise, dust and odors." This notice shall be provided to prospective purchase of property within an Agricultural District or on property with boundaries within 500 feet of a Farm Operation located in an Agricultural District.

A copy of this notice shall be included by the seller or seller's agent as an addendum to the purchase and sale contract at the time an offer to purchase is made.

§ 126-6. Agricultural Advisory Committee.

The Town Board shall create an Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) with the purpose of advising the Town on any and all agricultural matters. The Committee shall be composed of five town resident members, including three agriculture business owners, one nonagricultural residential owner, and one member of the Planning Board of the Town of Stanford.

§ 126-7. Resolution of disputes.

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Should any agriculturally related controversy arise, which cannot be settled by direct negotiation between the parties involved, the controversy may be submitted to the Town of Stanford Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) in an attempt to resolve such matter prior to or, if desired, alternatively, to filing of any court action or request for a determination by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets about whether the Agricultural Practice is sound pursuant to Article 25-AA, Section 308 of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law.

Any controversy submitted to the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), whose decision shall be advisory only, shall be submitted within thirty (30) days of the date of the occurrence of the particular activity giving rise to the controversy or the date the party became aware of the occurrence.

Upon necessary investigation of facts and full presentation and discussion of all pertinent information concerning the dispute from both parties—the committee must hold a meeting within 14 days of the matter to discuss the decision. Further, the committee shall, within 10 days of the meeting, render a written decision to both parties and the Town Clerk.

The time limits provided in this section for action by the Committee process shall be extended upon a written agreement of all parties involved in the dispute.

The decision of the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) shall not be binding. If a party is not satisfied with the Committee’s decision, said party may submit the matter to the Town Board according to the procedures set forth.

The controversy between the parties shall be submitted to the Town Board upon written request of either party.

The Town Board shall review the controversy with a report from the proceedings of the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC). Within 30 days of the written request, the Town Board shall render a written decision to the parties.

The decision of the Town Board shall not be binding.

To encourage the use of this mechanism to resolve disputes, the parties requesting to utilize this dispute resolution process shall stipulate, in writing, that the statements made during the process shall be deemed to be in the nature of settlement discussions and that such statements and any agreement reached as part of the dispute resolution process shall not be used for evidentiary purposes in any other action or proceeding.

§126-8. Right-to-Farm Sign.

At selective locations on the Town borders signs shall be posted stating that the Town of Stanford is a Right-to-Farm community.

Such signs shall be posted on the Town line on Bulls Head Rd, Bangall Amenia Rd, and Route 82 North and South, for a total four (4) signs collectively.

The sign shall appear substantively as follows:

A sign with a barn and text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Section 2.** Numbering for Codification. It is the intention of the Town of Stanford Town Board and it is hereby enacted that the provisions of this Local Law shall be included in the Code of the Town of Stanford; that the sections and subsections of this Local Law may be re-numbered or re-lettered by the Codifier to accomplish such intention; that the Codifier shall make no substantive changes to this Local Law; that the word “Local Law” shall be changed to “Chapter,” “Section” or other appropriate word as required for codification; and that any such rearranging of the numbering and editing shall not affect the validity of this Local Law or the provisions of the Code affected thereby.

**Section 3**. Severability. The invalidity of any word, section, clause, paragraph, sentence, part or provision of this Local Law shall not affect the validity of any other part of this Local Law, which can be given effect without such part or parts.

**Section 4.** Precedence. This Local Law and its provisions are in addition to all other applicable laws, rules and regulations.

**Section 5.** Effective Date. This Local Law shall take effect as of the date of filing with the New York Secretary of State.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, pursuant to the applicable standards of the SEQRA regulations contained in 6 NYCRR Part 617, the Town Board hereby declares the enactment of this proposed local

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law is a Type II Action pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (“SEQRA”) pursuant to 6 NYCRR 617.5(c)(26) and (33) and is therefore exempt from environmental review under SEQRA; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a public hearing be held in relation to the proposed local law as set forth in the form of notice, hereinafter provided, at which hearing parties in interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard, to be held at the Town Hall on July 10, 2025, at 7 o’clock P.M., and that notice of said meeting shall be published in the official newspaper of general circulation in the Town of Stanford by the Town Clerk, at least five (5) days before such hearing and that such notice shall be in the following form:

The foregoing resolution was voted upon with all Board members voting as follows:

Wendy Burton, Supervisor – Yes; Nathan Lavertue, Councilperson – absent; Julia Descoteaux, Councilperson- absent; Eric Haims, Councilperson – Yes; Theodore Secor, Councilperson – Yes.

Dated: June 12, 2025

Stanfordville, New York

Resolution #6A passed with the affirmative votes of the Town Board members present and certified this 12th day of June 2025. *Ritamary Bell, Town Clerk*

These changes will necessitate another public hearing, so a motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Eric Haims to set the Public Hearing for July 10th, 2025 at 7 PM. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

2. PROPOSED LOCAL LAW #5 – SHORT TERM RENTALS: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Teddy Secor, to hold a Special Meeting on Thursday, June 26th at 7 PM in order to hear residents’ comments on this proposed local law. Copies will be posted on the website and be available in the Town Clerk’s office.

3. NEGATE RESOLUTION #5B FOR A NEW TRANSFER STATION GATE: The cost of a new Transfer Station gate, approved at the May meeting, was nullified as the cost of the fencing had gone up 20% to $10,364 on a motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded y Eric Haims. This matter will be reconsidered in the future if need be. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: The Minutes of the May 8th, 2025 Town Board meeting were approved as written on a motion made by Eric Haims, seconded by Teddy Secor. Motion carried.

5. APPROVAL OF ABSTRACT #6 FOR JUNE 2025: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Teddy Secor to approve the payment for the June Abstract of Claims:

General Fund: check #’s 8472-8530 in the amount of $73,390.99

Highway Fund: check #’s 4777-4792 in the amount of $93,269.38

Escrow: check #’s 1065-1066 on the amount of $9,077.50

Ambulance: check #513 in the amount of $62.500.00

Total of Abstract #6 of 2025: $238,237.87

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR: No one addressed the Board.

With no other business, a motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Teddy Secor, to adjourn at 7:35 PM. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ritamary Bell