

Minutes - Town of Middlefield Planning Board, Jan 8, 2026 (Approved)

Board Members Present: Carol Kennedy, Sydney Waller, Cleo Mook, Julie Joyce, Rob Mol

Others Present: Neal Newman Town of Middlefield ZEO

Call to Order: Chair Sydney Waller, 7:03 PM

Privilege of the Floor – None.

Minutes of November 6, 2025, Meeting

Read by Carol Kennedy secretary. *Motion to approve November 6, 2025, minutes as modified – Julie Joyce, seconded by Cleo Mook, all were in favor.*

Projects from the community

None

Old Business & Reports

Update from December 2025 recent Town Board meeting

Planning Board chair attended shared that there was a review of Budget and end of year celebration.

Update on Climate Smart Community Task Force

Reviewed CSC minutes. Key points were that solar project for the Town garage is moving forward, bronze certification for the Town is now possible, and a multitown presentation on electricity including - reading a bill, community solar, status of electrical grid, energy requirements of data centers, is planned as part of a public education initiative.

How to Better Protect Farmland through Zoning Discussion

Minutes of Subcommittee Meetings

- Motion to forgo Nov 20, 2025, reading of minutes - Julie Joyce, Cleo Mook seconded, all were in favor.
- Motion to accept minutes of Dec 18, 2025, Farmland Protection Subcommittee meeting as amended by Cleo Mook, seconded by Rob Mol, all in favor.

Review of Farmland Definitions

- Motion to submit the seven definitions - ACTIVE AGRICULTURAL LAND, AGRICULTURAL DATA STATEMENT, AGRICULTURAL USE, FARM OPERATION, FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE, PRIME FARMLAND, PRIME FARMLAND IF DRAINED, and the Right to Farm description paragraph as amendments to Middlefield Zoning Law to Town board for review - Rob Mol, seconded by Julie Joyce, all in favor.

Agricultural Data Issue and Discussion

- Neal Newman will include information about Agricultural Data statement on website with a link to the NYS Agricultural Data statement forms.
- Neal Newman or Carol Kennedy will add the wording on the check lists - as an additional requirement - the completion of an Agricultural Data Statement if required for Special Use Permits, Site Plan approvals, Use Variances or Subdivision approvals forms.

Review zoning law site plan reviews - ambiguous section; rephrase for clarity will be covered at another meeting

New Business

- Proposed date for GIS workshop - 7 PM at Meadows Office Complex on January 22, 2026

Announcements

- Reminder to send Carol Kennedy your PD hours
- Neal Newman will make sure the new application to be on Planning Board is on the Town Website

- Review PDDs (Governale and Pleasant Meadows subdivisions – for example) that are not on our map.
- Rob Mol will organize a meeting with Justin Williams – OLT (Otsego Land Trust) Easement Specialist for Agriculture and Farms soon as the next step in our continued focus on Farmland Protection.

Motion to adjourn made by Cleo Mook; seconded by Julie Joyce. All were in favor.

Meeting ended at 8:45 PM. Minutes respectfully submitted, C. Kennedy

Middlefield Planning Board Farmland Protection Subcommittee

Proposed Amendments to New Zoning Definitions - Draft

- ACTIVE AGRICULTURAL LAND: Land used for a Farm Operation in accordance with Agriculture and Markets Law § 301 – uses of which include production of crops, livestock, and livestock products – within the past five years. Refer to current Comprehensive Plan Maps Appendix 14 Agricultural Land by Class.

- AGRICULTURAL DATA STATEMENT: A written identification of farm operations within an agricultural district located within five hundred (500) feet of the boundary of property upon which a site plan review, use variance, or a subdivision is proposed as provided in Section 305-a of the Agricultural and Markets Law of the State of New York.

- AGRICULTURAL USE: The use of a parcel of land for agricultural purposes including tilling the soil, dairying, pasture, apiculture, arboriculture, horticulture, floriculture, aquatic farming, harvesting of tree products and animal husbandry; also included are the necessary accessory uses and structures for packing, treating, and storing of products, produce and equipment, provided that the operation of any such accessory use shall be secondary to that of normal agricultural activities. Agricultural use includes on-site processing of meat from animals grown on-site but does not include slaughterhouses or meat processing from animals farmed off-site or kennels.

- FARM OPERATION: Land and on-farm buildings, equipment, facilities, and practices which contribute to the production, preparation, and marketing of crops, livestock, and livestock products as a commercial enterprise in accordance with Agriculture & Markets Law § 301[11].

- FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE: Land composed of soils that do not meet all the criteria for Prime Farmland or Prime Farmland if Drained, but are mineral soils in land capability classes 2e, 2s, 2w, 3e, 3s, 3w, or 4w. Refer to current Comprehensive Plan Maps Appendix 14A Prime Farmland.

- PRIME FARMLAND: Soils composed of - MINERAL SOIL GROUPS 1-4 (MSG 1-4): which are soils recognized by the New York State (NYS) Department of Agriculture and Markets as having the highest value based on soil productivity and capability, in accordance with the uniform statewide land classification system developed for the NYS Agricultural Assessment Program. Refer to current Comprehensive Plan Maps Appendix 14A Prime Farmland.

- PRIME FARMLAND IF DRAINED: Soils that meet all the prime farmland criteria except for depth to seasonal high-water table and are suitable for drainage. Refer to current Comprehensive Plan Maps Appendix 14A Prime Farmland

Right to Farm Description Addition to current Middlefield Zoning Law

This general statement should be included at the start of Zoning Laws, specifically in Article 1, Section D – Application of Regulations.

No provision of this Local Law shall be interpreted, administered, or enforced in a manner that unreasonably restricts farm operations within a State Certified Agricultural District established pursuant to Article 25AA of the New York State Agricultural and Markets Law, unless it can be shown that the public health and safety are threatened. As part of the Site Plan or subdivision review process, the Planning Board may require an Agricultural Data Statement if the application is in or within 500 feet of a certified New York State Agricultural District.