

# East Amwell Farm Project

- The Next Step -



## **Existing AVAD zoning:**

- has created more housing lots
- has made existing farms smaller
- has not made farming easier
- has not made existing farms more economically viable or sustainable

## **The future of farming will:**

- include smaller farms
- include more diversity among farms
- include niche or specialty farm products
- build on the success of, and complement, existing farms

**WE NEED SOME NEW INITIATIVES**

## **NEW ZONING ALONE IS NOT THE ANSWER**

- Large lot residential zoning
- whether that's 10 acre zoning or 25 acre zoning - creates large lot residential housing.

**It does not make farming more economically viable.**

East Amwell needs a more comprehensive planning solution.



**A comprehensive planning solution includes integrated planning with complementary zoning.**

**Integrated planning** includes multiple project initiatives that work together to realize the same objectives - making local farms economically sustainable.

**Complementary zoning** should be just one of the project initiatives - admittedly it is an important one - but even complementary zoning alone is not enough.

What is complementary zoning?

- AVAD
- Ringoes Village
- The Highway

## INTEGRATED PLANNING INITIATIVES

- Farm inventory
- Connect farm owners with farmers - Farmlink
- Connect farmers to end users
- Develop a directory of farm services and equipment for hire
- Help farmers find access affordable financing
- Develop an integrated marketing system for local farms
- East Amwell as a 'destination experience'
- Help farmers develop value-added operations
- Connect farmers with technical information and expertise
- Help farmers secure local planning approvals
- Start an incubator farming program for new farmers
- Grants for environmentally responsive farm practices
- Implement a program for effective wildlife control

## INTEGRATED PLANNING INITIATIVES (cont.)

### Even bigger ideas.....

- Develop a Farmers' Market
  - Full time staff
  - Include individual booths and a collective venue
  - Direct marketing to the public AND
  - Coordinated distribution to end users
  
- With a Resource Center
  - Collective marketing, purchasing, insurance, etc.
  - Interactive, web-based map of farm stands & services
  - Promote benefits of local farms
  - Provide advice on developing agritourism
  - Assist with environmental improvements
  - Provide local conflict resolution



## INTEGRATED PLANNING INITIATIVES (cont.)

### Possible Corporate Structure for Farmers' Market with Resource Center

- Local, Township-run non-profit
- Public/private partnership
- Independent non-profit
- Farmers' Coop
- County-run Economic Development Authority
- Some combination of the above





## INTEGRATED PLANNING INITIATIVES (cont.)

- **Farmland Director** to coordinate all the initiatives
- **Farmer's Advocate** to assist farmers and be their liaison to the community
- Establish a farm mentoring program for new and young farmers
- Develop a 'Farming Institute' for new farmers as well as high school students
- Create a local farm incubator program



## **INTEGRATED PLANNING INITIATIVES (cont.)**

### **- Complementary Zoning -**

- Update East Amwell's vision of a farming community
  - Preserving farmland vs sustainable farming
- Promote end users in Ringoes
  - Farm-to-table restaurants, etc.
- Promote farm service businesses on the highway
  - Fencing installation, transportation services, etc.
- Define appropriate agritourism
- Develop a formal system of trails for the equine community
- Coordinate uses for a farmland destination experience

## INTEGRATED PLANNING INITIATIVES (cont.)

### - Complementary Zoning -

- Develop appropriate zoning regulations for critical issues like:
  - Cannabis
  - Vineyards, distilleries, breweries
  - Hoop houses
  - Solar farms
  - Capitalizing on under-utilized farm buildings
  - Vertical farming
  - Community farming
  - Drone use
  - Carbon neutral/environmental responsible farming
  - Farm labor housing



## INTEGRATED PLANNING INITIATIVES (cont.)

### - Complementary Zoning -

- Update the AVAD Zoning District
  - Minimize adverse impact of large lot residential zoning
  - Establish farming as the primary/best use in the AVAD
  - Minimize conflicts between farms and residences
  - Expand permitted farming opportunities
  - Make farming more profitable than subdividing
  - Reduce infringement of residential uses on farms
  - Protect existing residences but minimize new residential development
  - Protect family farm legacies

# A COMMUNITY EFFORT

- **Township Committee** - Oversight, Ordinances, Funding
- **Planning Board** - Master Plan Revisions, Draft Ordinances
- **Ringoes Advisory Committee** - Update Vision for Ringoes
- **EC/Green Team** - Support for sustainable farming BMPs & environmental monitoring
- **Board of Health** - BMP support and technical assistance
- **AAC and FOSPC** - Liaisons with farmers
- **Historic Preservation Committee** - Protect East Amwell's historic character
- **Residents At Large** - Participate on subcommittees; research, brainstorming, expertise, skilled support, outreach and communications, social media management, assistance

