



**Town of Oneonta  
TOWN BOARD  
Regular Meeting  
November 12, 2025  
07:00PM**

The regular meeting of the Oneonta Town Board was held on November 12, 2025, with the following members present:

Interim Supervisor:	Brett D. Holleran	(BDH)
Town Board Member:	Kim Fierke	(KF)
Town Board Member:	Joseph M. Camarata	(JMC)
Town Board Member:	Patricia Riddell Kent	(PRK)

Others present: Ryan F. Pereira, Town Clerk; Anna Marie Lusins; Tirusha Dave; Prashanth Gorantala; Nathaniel Nichols; Scott Furman; Chris Maby; Jenny Koehn; Teresa DeSantis; Mary Ann Hurtubise; George Berberich; Jaquelyn Curlo; Jacquelyn Christensen; Nancy Smalley; Robert Smalley; Patricia Jacob; Rich Harlem; Caroline Williams, SUNY Oneonta; Michelle Catan; Jim Hurtubise; Jason Ballard, B&L; Dale Webster.

**§ "Privilege of the floor" §**

Tirusha Dave of Eco-Yotta, Inc. addressed the Board regarding their project proposal, clarifying that their project is agricultural in nature, focusing on hydroponic farming using sustainable technology. They expressed frustration that their July presentation to the Planning Board was not accurately reflected in the official minutes, contributing to misunderstandings about the project's nature. They emphasized that their proposal would use existing barn structures, not construct new buildings, and disputed characterizations about energy consumption and environmental impact.

Brett Jennings spoke in opposition to the Eco-Yotta, Inc. proposal, stating that the project had transformed from a data center (as described in their May filing) to an "Agri-Business" in their September filing. He expressed concerns about contradictions between filings, including a 20-fold increase in projected electricity usage, and questioned the viability of the business model.

Marie Lusins, who owned and lived at 357 County Highway 9 for 40 years, spoke in support of the Eco-Yotta, Inc. project, explaining the history of the property and emphasizing that water should not be an issue since the property has sufficient water capacity and the project would recycle water.

Jacquelyn Christensen expressed concerns about transparency regarding the farmhouse rezoning hearing, particularly about potential Stewart's Shop development. She was concerned that a presentation on the property would show disregard for the hearing outcome and community input.

Patricia Jacob read a letter from Keith Schillo criticizing the Eco-Yotta, Inc. proposal, noting concerns about environmental impacts, water usage, waste management, electricity demands, and the project's economic viability.

Several other residents spoke about transparency issues with the Eco-Yotta, Inc. project and concerns about its changing descriptions from an AI data center to an agricultural operation.

**PRESENTATION: SHORT TERM RENTAL AD-HOC COMMITTEE**

Board Member, Kim Fierke, presented findings from the Short-Term Rental Ad-Hoc Committee, which reviewed current policies, regulations, and practices related to short-term rentals in the town. The committee included representation from the Town Board, Planning Board, and community members both with and without short-term rentals.

As of September 11, 2025, there were 79 active short-term rentals in the town, primarily concentrated in West Oneonta, the West End, and along Old South Side. A community survey with 41 respondents highlighted concerns about housing affordability and availability, though there was also support for short-term rentals due to tourism dollars and additional income for families.

Local housing data showed that the average days on the market have dropped by more than 20% compared to 2023, and inventory is at a historic low. The Board has already implemented several changes, including increasing permit fees based on occupancy, adding a yearly checklist with attestation, collecting non-local owner information, and planning to publish contact information for short-term rental owners.

The committee presented several considerations supported by other municipalities, including restricting the number of short-term rentals in residential zones, encouraging them in commercial and rural zones, and exploring owner occupancy and residency requirements. The committee also supported encouraging accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on current properties.

**PRESENTATION: STEWART'S SHOPS**

Chuck Marshall from Stewart's Shops presented information regarding their interest in the farmhouse property. He clarified two points: first, that the building on the property has been condemned and will be demolished; and second, that Stewart's cannot locate at the Price Chopper Plaza due to prohibitions in the Price Chopper lease agreement.

Marshall explained that Stewart's is a contract vendee for the property, which is owned by Marty Patton. The property would need to be rezoned to B-2 to enable subdivision and trigger Stewart's contract. Interim Supervisor Holleran reminded Marshall that a subdivision had already occurred independent of the zoning decision.

The Board noted that they had voted against rezoning the property at the previous month's meeting (a 2-2 tie vote). Barry Fineman, who works with Marty Patton, asked for clarification on the process and whether they could reapply based on the new information presented. The Board will be following up with legal counsel for guidance since the Attorney to the Town was not present at the meeting.

**PRESENTATION: TIRUSHA DAVE DBA ECO-YOTTA, INC., ZONING AMENDMENT APPLICATION FOR 357 COUNTY HIGHWAY 9, RA-40 TO PDD/B**  
Attorney Nathaniel Nichols from Whiteman, Osterman, and Hanna LLP introduced his client, Eco-Yotta, Inc. (the "Applicant"), stating they were ready to answer any questions from the Board. He noted they were awaiting written questions and would be willing to answer those as they came in.

A lengthy and sometimes tense discussion ensued with Board members expressing frustration about the lack of concrete information about the project. Board members asked specific questions about energy usage, oversight, and operational details. The Applicant explained that their project would be conducted in phases, with Phase 1 involving research in a garage space on how to utilize waste heat from servers, and Phase 2 involving hydroponic farming in the barn.

The Board expressed concerns about the shifting description of the project and the lack of specific details about equipment, water usage, waste management, and business operations. The Applicant maintained that because the project was research-oriented rather than a standard business, many details would evolve as the research progressed.

The Board noted that the Planning Board had recommended against approving the rezoning request. After extensive discussion, the Board decided to schedule a special meeting on December 9, 2025, at 6:00 PM specifically for the Applicant to present more detailed information. The goal would be to then potentially refer the project for a 239 review by the County Planning Department.

**RESOLUTION 2025-0136 (08:44) Motion by JCM, seconded by BH;**

Whereas the Town Board votes to set special meeting December 9<sup>th</sup> @06:00pm;  
Whereas Eco-Yotta, Inc., *Zoning Amendment Application for 357 County Highway 9, RA-40 to PDD/B*;  
Whereas presentation will be made;  
Now therefore be it resolved;  
Whereupon the resolution was put to a vote and recorded as follows:

		AYE	NAY
Kim Fierke	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Joseph M. Camarata	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Patricia Riddell Kent	Board Member	<u>      </u>	<u>  X  </u>
Brett D. Holleran	Interim Supervisor	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.			
VOTE	AYES (3) NAYS (1)		

MOTION CARRIED

The Board continued the public hearing for the adoption of the 2026 preliminary budget. The budget has a combined value of \$3,941,662, with the general fund at \$1,644,700 and the highway budget at \$1,296,962. There is no tax increase, maintaining the same rate of \$2.70 per \$1,000 assessed value for the third consecutive year.

Whereas the Town Board votes to close the 2026 Preliminary Budget hearing;

Whereas will stay pending further review;

Now therefore be it resolved;

Whereupon the resolution was put to a vote and recorded as follows:

		AYE	NAY
Kim Fierke	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Joseph M. Camarata	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Patricia Riddell Kent	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Brett D. Holleran	Interim Supervisor	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE AYES (4)

MOTION CARRIED

With no questions or comments from the public, the Board closed the public hearing and adopted the 2026 budget.

\*Public notice published in The Daily Star, October 30, 2025.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

Town of Oneonta, State of New York

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held before the Town Board of the Town of Oneonta at the Oneonta Town Hall, 3966 State Highway 23, on the 6th day of November, 2025 at approx. 05:05 PM; for the purpose of which to present the preliminary budget.

This hearing will be followed by a regular meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November; for the purpose of which to adopt the budget at approx. 07:05 PM.

All interested residents are encouraged to attend; at such time and place all persons interested in the subject matter thereof will be heard concerning the same before approval.

Copies of the tentative budget shall be available at the time of the hearing and shall be available at times prior to and after the hearing at the Town Clerk's Office during normal business hours for the purpose of inspection or procurement by interested persons.

Dated: October 27, 2025

Oneonta, NY

Town Board

Town of Oneonta

Whereas the Town Board votes to adopt the 2026 Oneonta Town Budget;

Now therefore be it resolved;

Whereupon the resolution was put to a vote and recorded as follows:

		AYE	NAY
Kim Fierke	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Joseph M. Camarata	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Patricia Riddell Kent	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Brett D. Holleran	Interim Supervisor	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE AYES (4)

MOTION CARRIED

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Highway, Water and Sewer Committee

The committee reported that the highway department is facing challenges with their trucks. A new truck has been ordered but won't arrive until March, and they are trying to maintain their current fleet in the meantime.

The committee requested approval for the purchase of a Jetter trailer with accessories, a budgeted item at \$97,500, and a Metro Tech 810 locator for services for gas, water, and electric at \$4,206.92.

Regarding the Woodland Water and Hemlock Extension Water District, the committee is still waiting for a response from attorneys about the proper procedure for its creation.

The committee recommended the hire of Ryan Yager as a motor equipment operator for the highway department.

Public Safety Committee

The committee reported continued struggles with vacant properties. The code enforcement officer has given notice to no less than five properties in the last week, making positive progress on addressing these issues.

Facilities Technology Parks

The committee announced plans to replace the Pine Grove Pavilion at Fortin Park. They are working on getting estimates and specifications for a 30' x 40' structure with a concrete floor instead of the current cinder floor. The pavilion is frequently used for family reunions and birthday parties.

Legislative Committee

Nothing to report.

Human Resources and Public Benefit

Nothing to report.

Attorney

No report was given as legal counsel was not present.

Code Enforcement

As mentioned in the Public Safety report, the code enforcement officer has been making progress placarding vacant properties.

RESOLUTION 2025-0139 (08:52) Motion by JCM, seconded by PRK;

Whereas the Town Board votes to approve purchase;

Whereas *Jetter Trailer with all accessories*;

Whereas budgeted item for Water Dept. use;

Now therefore be it resolved;

Whereupon the resolution was put to a vote and recorded as follows:

		AYE	NAY
Kim Fierke	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Joseph M. Camarata	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Patricia Riddell Kent	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Brett D. Holleran	Interim Supervisor	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE AYES (4)

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTION 2025-0140 (08:53) Motion by BH, seconded by JCM;

Whereas the Town Board votes to approve purchase;

Whereas *Metro Tech 810 Locator* for Highway and Water Dept. use;

Now therefore be it resolved;

Whereupon the resolution was put to a vote and recorded as follows:

		AYE	NAY
Kim Fierke	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Joseph M. Camarata	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Patricia Riddell Kent	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Brett D. Holleran	Interim Supervisor	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE AYES (4)

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTION 2025-0141 (08:55) Motion by PRK, seconded by BH;

Whereas the Town Board votes to approve new hire;

Whereas *Ryan Yagger, MEO*;

Now therefore be it resolved;

Whereupon the resolution was put to a vote and recorded as follows:

AYE	NAY
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MOTION CARRIED

MOTION CARRIED

Whereas the Town Board votes to accept October meeting minutes;

Now therefore be it resolved;

Whereupon the resolution was put to a vote and recorded as follows:

		AYE	NAY
Kim Fierke	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Joseph M. Camarata	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Patricia Riddell Kent	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Brett D. Holleran	Interim Supervisor	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE AYES (4)

MOTION CARRIED

Whereas the Town Board votes to approve payment of the bills;

Now therefore be it resolved;

Whereupon the resolution was put to a vote and recorded as follows:

		AYE	NAY
Kim Fierke	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Joseph M. Camarata	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Patricia Riddell Kent	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Brett D. Holleran	Interim Supervisor	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE AYES (4)

MOTION CARRIED

### **§ "Privilege of the floor" §**

During the final privilege of the floor, residents expressed continued concerns about the Eco-Yotta, Inc. project and asked for clarification about the December 9th special meeting. The Board clarified that it would be a presentation meeting and not a public hearing, though the public could attend.

A resident also addressed Michelle Catan's earlier comments about county costs for mental health services, expressing concern that this might be used to discourage supportive housing development in the future.

Whereas the Town Board votes to adjourn;

Whereas the Town Board having no further business;

Now therefore be it resolved;

Whereupon the resolution was put to a vote and recorded as follows:

		AYE	NAY
Kim Fierke	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Joseph M. Camarata	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Patricia Riddell Kent	Board Member	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>
Brett D. Holleran	Interim Supervisor	<u>  X  </u>	<u>      </u>

The foregoing resolution was thereupon declared duly adopted.

VOTE AYES (4)

MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan F. Pereira  
Oneonta Town Clerk

**Abstract #****11**Dates 10/10/25-  
11/12/25  
Friday - Wednesday**General Checking**

<b><u>Fund</u></b>			<b><u>PrePaid</u></b>		<b><u>To Be Paid</u></b>		<b><u>Total PrePaid/To Be Paid</u></b>
General	<b>1</b>	\$	-	\$	121,428.74	\$	121,428.74
Highway	<b>3</b>	\$	-	\$	72,903.95	\$	72,903.95
St Lights #1	<b>7</b>	\$	-	\$	2,543.24	\$	2,543.24
St Lights #2	<b>14</b>	\$	-	\$	269.95	\$	269.95
St Lights #3	<b>15</b>	\$	-	\$	916.89	\$	916.89
St Lights #4	<b>16</b>	\$	-	\$	54.56	\$	54.56
St Lights #5	<b>17</b>	\$	-	\$	261.46	\$	261.46
Butler Creek-Blanchard Capital	<b>28</b>	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-
Butler Creek-Winney Hill Capital	<b>29</b>	\$	-	\$	17,155.91	\$	17,155.91
Fire Protection	<b>25</b>	\$	-	\$	477,000.00	\$	477,000.00
<b>Subtotal</b>		\$	-	\$	692,534.70	\$	692,534.70

**District Checking**

WESD	<b>8</b>	\$	-	\$	5,003.32	\$	5,003.32
WSSD	<b>9</b>	\$	-	\$	1,882.93	\$	1,882.93
SSD	<b>10</b>	\$	-	\$	9,651.73	\$	9,651.73
WWD	<b>11</b>	\$	-	\$	3,270.57	\$	3,270.57
PWD	<b>12</b>	\$	-	\$	18,845.60	\$	18,845.60
SSWD	<b>21</b>	\$	-	\$	15,241.07	\$	15,241.07
District Subtotal		\$	-	\$	53,895.22	\$	53,895.22

**Trust and Agency Checking**

T & A	<b>99</b>	\$	61.24	\$	166.27	\$	227.51
		\$	61.24	\$	166.27	\$	227.51

**CDBG**

CDBG Grants	26	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-
		\$	-	\$	-	\$	-
Totals		\$	61.24	\$	746,596.19	\$	746,657.43

**Clerk:** Approved Expenses / Voucher #

General	\$	121,428.74	2025-588 to 2025-670
Highway	\$	72,903.95	
St Lighting	\$	4,046.10	
Winney Hill -Butler Crk	\$	17,155.91	
Fire Protection	\$	477,000.00	
WESD	\$	5,003.32	
WSSD	\$	1,882.93	
SSD	\$	9,651.73	
WWD	\$	3,270.57	
PWD	\$	18,845.60	
SSWD	\$	15,241.07	
T&A	\$	166.27	
CDBG	\$	-	
	\$	746,596.19	



## **§-PUBLIC STATEMENTS-§**

Good evening members of the Board,

I want to thank the board for their time and for allowing us the opportunity to continue addressing questions transparently and factually.

At the last meeting, a statement was read that included several inaccuracies and mischaracterizations about both our project and our process. I would like to respectfully clarify those points on record.

First and foremost, this is not a data center. The core function of our project is agricultural — a hydroponic farming operation that grows produce year-round using sustainable technology. The AI servers on site are simply a utility source — they capture and repurpose their own waste heat to warm the barn and circulate water through a closed-loop system. The technology serves the farm — it does not define it.

This explanation was clearly presented and discussed at the July Planning Board meeting, and we encourage anyone with lingering uncertainty to review the recording of that meeting. Unfortunately, this portion of the discussion was not accurately reflected in the official minutes, despite our explicit request that it be included. That omission has contributed to continued misunderstanding about the nature of our project, even though the facts were already placed on record months ago.

Second, the term "Agri-business" is not something we created or redefined. It is a term used widely by the USDA and the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets. It refers to any business engaged in agricultural production, processing, or technology that supports farming. Our proposal fits squarely within that scope.

However, I also want to highlight a broader procedural concern. The Board has a legal obligation to interpret permitted uses under the zoning code — such as "Farm" or "Agriculture" — and then apply the standard Accessory Use Test to determine whether supporting technology or infrastructure is consistent with those uses. Instead, much of the recent discussion has centered on a term — "Agri-business" — that is not defined anywhere in the zoning code, and has been used as a basis to suggest prohibition. That approach represents a misapplication of the law, because it bypasses the Town's responsibility to interpret existing, permitted categories and evaluate how this project aligns with them.

There were also comments suggesting that our project would consume enough energy to power 400 homes and therefore is not environmentally friendly. That is incorrect. The 3 GWh figure referenced was a theoretical peak estimate used for system sizing — not the project's actual energy use. In practice, consumption depends on the hydroponic design and research cycle, and our goal is to optimize energy efficiency, not overuse it. This project seeks to solve a problem in agriculture — improving thermal efficiency and reducing waste — not create one.

It was also stated that NYSEG had not been consulted. That is false. We have been in contact with NYSEG engineers to confirm grid compatibility, and our projected load is well within local capacity.

Another misconception is that our proposal covers 153 acres of development. We clarified this in July: we are not constructing new buildings and will use the existing barns only. Any suggestion to the contrary is speculative and misleading.

In addition, there has been confusion regarding our Zoning Determination Letter. That letter was part of a separate procedural process and unrelated to this PDD application. Linking the two misrepresents their intent and confuses both the Board and the public.

Finally, I want to address the concern that this project would "fundamentally change a neighborhood." In reality, our footprint is small, quiet, and sustainable. We are reusing existing farm infrastructure and introducing clean technology that reduces water use by more than 90% and energy costs by over 50%. This is innovation in agriculture, not industrialization of rural land.

As always, we remain open and transparent and have nothing to hide.

I urge the Board and the community to evaluate this proposal based on facts and documentation, not assumptions or misinformation. We are proud to bring forward a model that reflects both Oneonta's agricultural heritage and its potential for sustainable growth.

There's been a repeated theme in these meetings — that the board "has so many questions" about this project. But I think it's fair, and necessary, to ask in return: Has the board ever actually sent us those questions?

We've made it very clear, on multiple occasions, that we welcome open dialogue. We invited both the Town and Planning Board members to tour the property on July 16, 2025 — to walk through the barn, see the layout, and understand physically what this project is and is not.

Not one person has taken us up on that offer or even replied to our request.

No written list of questions has ever been shared with us.

No site visit has been scheduled.

And no effort has been made to sit down with us — people who are ready and willing to provide any clarification this board might need.

So, the idea that "we don't have enough information" doesn't hold up when every opportunity to learn more has been declined.

The truth is simple:

We can't move toward understanding if there's no willingness to engage.

You can't keep saying "we have questions" when you've never asked them directly to the people who have the answers.

We remain ready —today, tomorrow, or any day you choose — to walk through the site and show you exactly what this project looks like.

All we ask in return is that this process be guided by facts and fairness, not assumptions or avoidance.

By: Tirusha Dave

Submitted to the Town of Oneonta Board

Date: November 12, 2025

To: Town of Oneonta Board

Brett Holleran

Patricia Riddell Kent

Kim Fierke

Joe Camarata

Cc: Ryan Pereria, Town Clerk

From: Keith K. Schillo

Re: Eco-Yotta, Inc. application for Planned Development District (PDD)

I have been following discussions of the Eco-Yotta application for a Planned Development District in the Town of Oneonta and have read copies of their original and amended applications and respectfully offer the following analysis for your consideration. I don't believe many of the issues I raise have been addressed thus far and ask that they be read at the November 12 Board meeting and/or entered into the minutes of this meeting. I would present these comments in person, but I am not able to attend the meeting because I am scheduled for outpatient surgery on that date. The Eco-Yotta proposal for a PDD should not be approved for the following reasons.

**1. Eco-Yotta underestimates and/or misrepresents the potential for negative environmental and aesthetic impacts.**

- a. The justification for rezoning the entire 153-acre property is unclear.** The PDD application indicates that activities will be confined to an existing garage and barn (a total of 11,300 square feet), yet the proposal requests rezoning of the entire 153-acre property. The justification for the large acreage is unclear and could pave the way for expansion of the business. A vertical farming operation on 153 acres, run by computer servers, will likely generate unintended consequences such as increased demand for electricity, increased traffic, and generation of agricultural pollutants.
- b. The proposed operation will generate wastewater.** In its Full Environmental Assessment Form, Eco-Yotta asserts the business will not impose major impacts on waste management. This is a glaring misrepresentation of indoor farming operations. Although the proposed growing system recycles water, the proposed operation will require 2,200 gallons of water per day. Approximately 110 gallons will be wastewater (assuming 95% recycling efficiency) that will contain nitrate and phosphate, both of which are considered agricultural pollutants. The application should stipulate this and explain how the wastewater will be treated.
- c. The proposed operation will generate large amounts of solid waste.** Eco-Yotta asserts that its work "will not involve or require management or disposal of solid waste (excluding hazardous materials)." However, indoor growing operations are known to generate various solid waste from plants (roots), growing medium, growing containers, latex gloves, etc. An operation for lettuce generates 1.5 pounds of waste per pound of lettuce. The amount of waste from a 11,000 square foot operation will average 90,750 pounds per year. Although most of this waste will be organic and can be composted, proper aerobic composting is required to avoid production of greenhouse gases, and the compost must be disposed of.
- d. The proposed operation will require a large increase in electricity.** Eco-Yotta admits that the proposed operation will increase additional demands for electricity, presumably from LED lighting and use of computer servers. They estimate an annual electricity demand of 3,000,000 kWh. This is within the range reported by several indoor farming publications. It should be noted that this increase in demand is equivalent to an increase of 103 houses (5%) in the Town of Oneonta (103 houses). The long-term impact of this increase is worth considering because it will contribute to a growing demand for power which underlies rate hikes recently proposed by NYSEG.
- e. The requirements for running the proposed farming operation are not adequately addressed.** The amount of food produced by an 11,000 square foot indoor growing facility is not insignificant and will require daily harvesting, packaging and distribution. Eco-Yotta anticipates 5 to 10 people (staff and students) will travel to the site each day. A highly automated indoor farm typically requires 4-6 full-time employees who possess specific technical skills to oversee automation. In addition, a farm manager with expertise in plant science is necessary to maintain proper growing conditions and oversee disease prevention. Operations assistants and packers are also required to perform

daily oversight of crops and prepare products for shipping. A sales and marketing specialist is also routinely employed. It seems unlikely that "student researchers" will fulfill these needs.

## 2. The proposed Eco-Yotta, agri-business is ill-conceived and offers little-to-no benefit to the community.

- a. Misclassification of the proposed agricultural operation. Eco-Yotta's has no record of experience with agriculture let alone indoor growing systems. Their ignorance is illustrated by their description of their proposed operation. They classify their facilities as "indoor greenhouses", but the indoor growing system will be housed in a "garage" and "barn." Greenhouses take advantage of natural sunlight whereas the facility described by Eco-Yotta is more appropriately classified as a vertical farming system that requires high-intensity artificial light.
- b. No evidence of support for agricultural research. Eco-Yotta plans to focus on "agricultural research" but lacks both the professional skills and institutional support required for meaningful scientific research. They claim they will collaborate with SUNY Oneonta to seek grants and engage in research. However, the memorandum of understanding with SUNY Oneonta does not mention agricultural research or collaboration on grant development. Moreover, the school has no academic or research programs that deal with agriculture production and therefore cannot provide the expertise and facilities required for developing competitive grant proposals for agricultural research. Although the school's Biology Department has a greenhouse, it is not equipped for growing crops in the manner described by Eco-Yotta. It is important to note that neither the department nor the faculty member responsible for the facility were made aware of any agreement between the SUNY Oneonta President and Eco-Yotta.
- c. The proposed project will not benefit the community. The idea that the Eco-Yotta facility will offer benefits to local agriculture or consumers is disingenuous. According to most financial analyses, vertical farming operations have not been economically sustainable, and many have declared bankruptcy in the past three years. Most experts now believe that indoor farming should be confined to locations with low utility costs (e.g. oil-rich Middle Eastern nations) or where high utility costs can be offset by a lower the cost of transporting produce to markets, e.g., converting abandoned urban structures into indoor farms near large population centers. In this region of New York State, conventional farms or those that use true greenhouses are more common and more cost effective than indoor farms. Indoor growing systems are the standard in cannabis production. It is unlikely that local farmers who use conventional production methods will benefit from the work proposed by Eco-Yotta. The high start-up costs associated with indoor agriculture are prohibitive for most local market gardeners, and the types of crops (high-value salad greens and fruiting crops like tomatoes and strawberries) are more suitable for the restaurant trades of large metropolitan areas. Finally local producers may view the proposed indoor farming operation as unwelcome competition to their businesses.

In summary, the Eco-Yotta proposal lacks credibility. Based on available information it seems likely that the proposed "agribusiness" will not be a sustainable enterprise and will be more of a burden than benefit to the community.

## §

November 12, 2025

### Transparency.

When I spoke in October, transparency was my central concern regarding the Farmhouse rezoning hearing.

Due to tonight's order of operations and the vague agenda, I'm unsure why Stewart's is presenting. I'm here to listen. Perhaps it's about a gas station near Price Chopper. Those of us on the east end were *never opposed* to a gas station in general. We were opposed to **rezoning perfectly good residential property** when there is already **ample commercial land** available on the business side of Route 7. Fortunately, that rezoning request was not approved—and honestly, I thought my calendar would be clear tonight.

So, I can only hope that Stewart's presentation is *not* about the Farmhouse property—for two reasons.

First, because it would be a very, very bad look for those who insisted there was "no development associated with the proposal" and who dismissed it as "just a rumor." Even Mr. Maby became defensive last month when residents suggested otherwise.

Second, because it would show **blatant disregard** for the hearing's outcome, the lack of support (per the available data gathered), and for the **many community members** who spent time and energy participating in good faith.

If this presentation is, in fact, about the Farmhouse property, I want to say: while I sympathize with Mr. Patton's desire to generate revenue from his property, that is his problem. It should not become a **community problem**. He needs to figure out a solution that respects the residential zoning, instead of embarking on a drawn-out, Machiavellian effort to push through a project that contradicts the Town's comprehensive plan and public sentiment.

Let me reiterate what I said in October:

When **money and property interests exploit bureaucratic loopholes** to override community needs, that's a problem. When officials allow it, that's not just a policy failure—it's a **breach of public trust**.

I also see Eco Yotta on the agenda tonight, and I look forward to learning more. But I have to point out a troubling inconsistency. In September and October, we were told that a zoning request could exist *without* development plans. Yet in this case, the board is digging deeply into Eco Yotta's plans to justify whether rezoning makes sense. Why does it matter what Eco Yatta is doing? Because apparently, it was supposed to "not matter" when it came to the Farmhouse property. I understand these are different types of zoning requests (B-2 vs. PDD), but the principle is the same.

If transparency matters, then it must apply equally. Let's hold every rezoning proposal—Farmhouse, Eco Yotta, or any other—to the same fair, open, and honest standard.

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