

SUSSEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

MINUTES

JANUARY 19, 2015

The meeting opened at 7:45 p.m. by Chairperson Brodhecker in the Freeholder Meeting Room at the Sussex County Administrative Center, One Spring Street, Newton, New Jersey. The meeting was held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-1 of 1975, as amended. Notice has been forwarded to the newspapers and posted on the bulletin board maintained at the Sussex County Administrative Center for public announcement.

**ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Brodhecker, Chairperson  
Brian Hautau  
Jim Hunt  
Cece Pattison  
Joan Snook Smith (8:00 p.m.)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Lori Day, Vice Chairperson

STAFF PRESENT: Autumn Sylvester, Program Manager  
Rudy Dragan, Planning Aide  
Antoinette Wasiewicz, Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: None

**REORGANIZATION:**

A Motion was made by Brian Hautau to keep the Jane Brodhecker as Chair and Lori Day as Vice Chair of the Sussex County Agriculture Development Board. The motion was seconded by Jim Hunt and carried unanimously.

**MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:**

A motion was made by Cece Pattison to accept the Minutes of December 21, 2015, as presented. The motion was seconded by Jim Hunt. All were in favor, with abstentions from Brian Hautau and Joan Snook Smith. Motion carried.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

A. ARTICLES OF INTEREST:

Autumn provided the Board with articles relating to the breakdown of the Corporate Business Tax for Preservation Programs; a News Release from the National Park Service regarding informational meetings on a Historic Properties Management Plan; an article from the Farmers Food Hub regarding a Food Shed Alliance Meeting; and an article relating to a Watershed Identity and Scenario Development as part of a Delaware River Basin Project.

B. LETTER TO BRETT SINGER:

A letter was sent to Brett Singer who owns what was the Peck Farm. He requested permission to construct a driveway on his preserved farm in order to access a landlocked lot which is not preserved, but he also owns. Autumn said she sent him a letter advising him that he can create an access as long as it is for an agricultural purpose and doesn't hinder the agricultural use of the fields. He cannot create a permanent access easement because those rights were relinquished.

C. SADC UPDATE:

An SADC update was received from Stefanie Miller. The Certification of Market Value is pending for the Mulvaney farm. The update also gave the remaining balance of our base grant and the competitive funding grant. The Bert Smith farm received final approval for the Municipal Planning Incentive Grant as well as the DanaRay farm. The Caretta farm is still waiting for the landowner's decision on their offer. Ms. Miller also included a report that on January 11, the Assembly passed S2769. It is now going to the Governor.

D. NJ FARM BUREAU LETTER:

A letter was received from the New Jersey Farm Bureau about the funding allocation. The letter was received before the Assembly passed the Bill, but after our December meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

A. FY 2013 APPLICATION UPDATE:

There are four farms in the Fiscal Year 2013 funding round: Libby, Paladino, Duddy and Gianatasio. The surveyors are surveying three of the farms. The surveyors for the Libby farm have been unable to contact the landowner. Autumn said she will call or email him to see if he is interested. She has not received the signed contract. Autumn said she hopes to have the surveys back in a month or two and then she will send them to the State for review.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A. WESSELHOF COMMERCIAL FARM CERTIFICATION:

This farm is owned by 56 & 58 Sunset Inn Road LLC and is located in Lafayette Township on Block 9, Lots 18 and 18.03. Block 9, Lot 18 is in preservation, but Lot 18.03 is not. This is where the activity will occur. Mr. Wesselhof is proposing on-farm direct marketing facility.

Mr. Wesselhof went to the Township for Zoning approval and was given approval by the Township Engineer. He also received County Planning Board and DEP approval. When he went to file for building permits, the Zoning Officer reviewed it and said the use was not permitted. Mr. Wesselhof started the Use Variance process and withdrew it after one year. He wants to file for a Site Specific Ag. Management Practice. Autumn said the Board needs to certify that this is a commercial farm.

Autumn said the lot in question is owned by 56 & 58 Sunset Inn Road, LLC. If the farm management unit is a parcel or parcels of land, whether contiguous or non-contiguous, including the structures that produce products and operate as a single enterprise, it is allowed. Because it is the same owner and the same farm, it is all considered a farm management unit. The total acreage is approximately 42 acres. Lot 18.03 is one acre and Lot 18 is approximately 41 acres. Agriculture is a permitted use on the property. Mr. Wesselhof included receipts and listed income along with his Farmland Assessment forms. He meets the \$2,500 in annual income.

Autumn explained that the lot is included in the R-5 Zone, which is the underlying zone. Lafayette adopted an overlay zone. The municipal zoning ordinance says that the more restrictive use applies and is why a Use Variance was needed. Mr. Wesselhof wants to operate out of an existing house.

**MOTION:**

A motion was made by Jim Hunt to certify that the Wesselhof farm is a commercial farm and he can continue in the right-to-farm process. The motion was seconded by Brian Hautau. A roll-call vote was taken, all were in favor. Motion carried.

B. 2015 FPP APPLICATION RANKINGS;

Autumn said this item was carried over from last month's meeting. The Board needs to determine whether or not they want to preserve these farms. Autumn provided the Board with statistics on the VanWingerden farm, the Dan Lacz farm and the Kirk Stephens farm. When asked if there was a fourth farm, Autumn said that Kirk Stephens owns another farm further down the road. He is partners with his family and there are some legalities to work out before he submits an application for Farmland Preservation. There was also some discussion about the possibility of identifying good farms and reaching out to the landowners about preservation.

The Board discussed the farms at length. There was discussion on whether money should be spent on farms which do not have much development potential. Brian said

the intent of the Act was more to preserve land for agriculture. He added that if a farm only has 20 acres and only one house can be put on it, will that ruin the agricultural prospects for that piece of land. Joan said it is still 20 acres and if they preserve twenty 20-acre farms, then you've preserved a lot of land. Autumn said this farm abuts Tri-Farms in Green Township and Andover Borough. Because of Andover Borough's zoning ordinance, it does have the potential for multi units housing.

The Board agreed to fund the Kirk Stephens farm and ranked it as number one. They ranked the Dan Lacz farm as number two. With the VanWingerden farm, there were some issues such as a business plan that the Board wanted to see resolved before making a decision as to whether or not to preserve the farm.

C. BERT SMITH FARM FINAL RESOLUTION:

Autumn prepared a Resolution for Final Approval for the Bert Smith farm in Frankford Township. Last March, the Board agreed to provide cost-share funding of one quarter of the purchase price, which was \$660 per acre, for a total of \$29,106.00.

**MOTION:**

A motion was made by Jim Hunt to approve the Final Review and Approval for the Bert Smith farm. The motion was seconded by Brian Hautau. A roll-call vote was taken. All were in favor, with abstentions from Cece Pattison and Joan Snook Smith.

D. DANARAY FARM FINAL RESOLUTION:

Autumn prepared a Resolution for Final Approval of the DanaRay Farm also in Frankford Township. In December 2014, the Board agreed that the County would put in \$10,000.00 in matching funds to preserve this farm.

**MOTION:**

A motion was made by Brian Hautau to approve the Final Review and Approval for the Bert Smith farm. The motion was seconded by Joan Snook Smith. A roll-call vote was taken. All were in favor, with abstentions from Cece Pattison and Joan Snook Smith.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Rudy and Autumn gave a brief presentation on an online version of the Four Seasons of Agriculture brochure. This will replace the Sussex Farm Visits website.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jim Hunt. The motion was seconded by Cece Pattison and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.