

SUSSEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

MINUTES

JULY 21, 2014

The meeting opened at 7:35 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
Lori Day, Vice Chairperson
Brian Hautau
Jim Hunt (7:37 p.m.)
Cece Pattison
Joan Snook Smith (7:36 p.m.)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Peter Southway

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

ALSO PRESENT: Dennis McConnell, Esq., County Counsel

MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Lori Day to accept the Minutes of May 19, 2014 as presented. The motion was seconded by Cece Pattison. All were in favor, with abstentions by Brian Hautau, Jim Hunt and Peter Southway. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:

A. NJ FARM BUREAU – OPEN SPACE FUNDING:

The Assembly failed to vote on the proposal to dedicate a portion of Corporate Business Tax revenues for farmland preservation/open space acquisitions when the voting session was cancelled. (The bill passed the Senate 36/1.) There is an outside chance of a special session over the summer where the measure could be voted on. However, a vote must happen before August 3rd if the proposal is to make the November 2014 ballot. Chances of such a special session being held are slim.

B. SENATE BILL 1050 – HIGHLANDS APPRAISAL BILL:

The Highlands Act was signed into law in 2004. It restricts development in an area that includes parts of Warren, Hunterdon, Bergen, Passaic, Morris, Somerset and Sussex counties. It was intended to protect freshwater sources for millions of residents. The law greatly diminished property values in the Highlands, prompting the New Jersey Legislature to approve dual appraisal. Properties preserved in the Highlands area receive two appraisals: one representing the current value and the representing the estimated value before Highlands went into effect. A property is preserved under the higher of the two values. The Bill was tabled.

C. SADC LANDOWNER/LEASING PROGRAM:

Autumn said when she attended the SADC meeting in June. They talked about new Leasing and Farmland Programs. She prepared a booklet that contains information for landowners and farmers who want to start leasing their land. It offers suggestions, a sample lease and some examples.

D. SENATE BILL 837 – WINERIES ON PRESERVED LAND:

Senate Bill 837 passed. New Jersey wineries on preserved farmlands will now be allowed to host private events, such as weddings and fundraisers. The State Agriculture Development Committee, which administers the farmland preservation program, ruled that the ability to host special events on preserved farms is not protected by the state's Right-to-Farm Act. Under the new law, the SADC will create a pilot program permitting special occasion events to be conducted on wineries located on preserved farmland under carefully prescribed rules.

The events will be allowed only if the gross income generated by special occasion events are less than 50 percent of the winery's gross income for the year, the event uses the agricultural output of the winery to the maximum extent possible and the special event is conducted on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday or federal or state holiday.

Events must also be conducted in a temporary structure such as an open canopy or tent, an existing permanent agricultural building, a farm or open-air pavilion or another structure used in the normal course of winery operations. All local laws such as noise ordinances and curfews must also be adhered to.

AG. AGENT'S REPORT:

Steve Komar was not present this evening.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. AGRITOURISM UPDATE:

i. HARVEST FESTIVAL UPDATE; - Autumn reported that "Save the Date" information was sent out to past participants of the Harvest Festival. The Harvest Festival is planned for October 11. Some responses have been received. The majority are interested in participating in this event.

Autumn said she met with The Heritage Council to combine resources. They are putting the Harvest Festival on their map for the Fall Heritage Tour which is being held on the same weekend.

B. FPP UPDATES:

i. OUTSTANDING ISSUES – FARM APPLICATIONS; - The survey is in for the Golden farm and is being reviewed by the Engineering Department.

ii. APPRAISALS: - The revised survey for the Klein farm was received. The appraisal then had to be revised because they are entering the Federal Farmland Preservation Program. This required different standards for the survey and appraisal. On Thursday, both appraisers' reports were received for the nine farms. A Confidential Appraisal Report was provided to the Board. A brief discussion followed.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. SCADB DRAFT LETTER – REVIEW WITH COUNTY COUNSEL:

Chairperson Jane Brodhecker turned over the meeting to the Vice Chair, Lori Day. Lori reported that she met with Dennis McConnell discuss her letter and that he made some corrections. Copies of the revised letter were provided to the Board and they were given time to read it through. The Board members said the letter should be sent with to minor punctuation changes. Autumn said she will send the revised letter to Lori for her signature.

MOTION;

A motion was made by Brian Hautau to accept and send the letter to the SADC. The motion was seconded by Joan Snook Smith and carried unanimously with an abstention from Jane Brodhecker.

Dennis McConnell said there may be a Right-to-Farm issue in Hampton Township. This is for a nine-acre equine operation. The farmer recently purchased the farm and he wants to build a barn for the horses. Hampton Township said he could not build a barn because an ancillary building needs to have a house on the property. The farmer does plan to build a house on the farm in the future. Mr. McConnell said the farmer does have an income of \$2,500 for the equine operation and that there are special rules with regard to Right-to-Farm and equine.

Lori suggested the use of Facebook for advertising. She said she will work with Autumn and Rudy for advertising the Harvest Festival on her Facebook page. Lori and Autumn discussed the advertising timeframe.

Joan said the Fair has a new website and that they are looking for information to include on the site year round. There is an agriculture part to the website. She suggested that Autumn write something regarding the Agriculture Development Board and the Farmland Preservation process. Information regarding the Harvest Festival would also be welcomed. Joan also talked about "The Show-De-O", a celebration of Sussex County Agriculture, being held at the Fairgrounds on Wednesday, August 6 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

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 8:06 p.m.