

SUSSEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

MINUTES

JULY 20, 2015

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
Jim Hunt
Cece Pattison
Peter Southway

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Lori Day
Brian Hautau

STAFF PRESENT: Autumn Sylvester, Program Manager
Rudy Dragan, Planning Aide

ALSO PRESENT: John Williams, Esq., County Counsel

MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Cece Pattison to accept the Minutes of June 15, 2015 as presented. The motion was seconded by Jane Brodhecker. All were in favor, with abstentions by Jim Hunt and Peter Southway. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:

A. ARTICLES OF INTEREST:

The Board was provided with the following articles: Farming Tradition Grows Strong in Area Families which appeared in the N.J. Herald and News from the NJDA.

B. SADC UPDATE FROM STEFANIE MILLER:

Stefanie Miller provided updates on the County Planning Incentive Grants. The County has seven farms with final approval, which includes Goldman and Sella, plus the additional four that were granted final approval at the June 28th SADC meeting. The Mulvaney farm is currently being reviewed for Green Light Approval. All of the final documents have been submitted to the State.

There is a balance of \$8.1 million in competitive funds for the County PIG Grants. There are three pending applications for the municipal Planning Incentive Grants, two in Frankford Township and one in Green Township. The two in Frankford are the Bert Smith and the Danaray farm; the farm in Green Township is the Caretta farm. There are no current Direct Easement Applications in Sussex County.

There was also some information on Future Funding which included the Corporation Business Tax (CBT.) They noted that the State Budget process concluded with no clarity on how much funding Farmland Preservation and other programs will receive from the approximately \$80 million projected.

The Soils Disturbance Subcommittee met again last month with the State Board of Ag. Both Boards agreed it was a very productive meeting and there was an open exchange of ideas on soil disturbance. They will continue to solicit input from the Ag Community, particularly the CADBs.

The Farmland Preservation Program Research and the New Jersey Agriculture Experiment Station has conducted a considerable amount of research regarding farmland preservation from both the State and national perspectives. They discussed key findings of the SADC meeting last month. Their Power Point Presentation is available on the SADC's website. Autumn said she would e-mail copies of the presentation to the Board if they wished. Jane Brodhecker said she read about this in the Minutes and that there was a lot of good information given out at that session.

C. NJ MEDIATION PROGRAM MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT:

Correspondence was received from the SADC relating to the NJ Agricultural Mediation Program regarding the Mosefund Farm. An agreement was reached between the two neighbors who were complaining. Copies of the agreement were provided to the Board.

D. LANDOWNER GUIDE TO SADC PROCEDURES FOR CONDEMNATION OF PRESERVED FARMLAND:

The Landowner Guide to SADC Procedures for the Condemnation of Preserved Farmland was received from the SADC. This relates to the pipeline coming through Hunterdon and Somerset counties. Autumn said there were two editorials in the Hunterdon County Democrat that said the SADC was bowing down to the pipeline companies and accepting money instead of listening to the landowners. Susan Payne wrote back a response saying that that's not the process and there are laws that are being followed. She said there is a regulatory formula to figure out the price that the pipeline company has to pay. She clarified some of rumors.

AG. AGENT'S REPORT:

Steve Komar was not able to attend this evening's meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM:

Klein – Autumn reported that the Klein farm closed on June 28. This was the last farm that Dennis McConnell closed. John Williams, the new County Counsel also attended the closing.

Sella – All of the final documents for the Sella farm have been submitted for legal review. Some documents need to be revised. Autumn said she is working on that and will get the documents out to the Title Company and Surveyor, after they are revised by John Williams.

FY 2013 Application Updates – On June 28th, the SADC granted final approval for the 2013 applications. A Request for Proposals needs to be sent out for the Surveyors. It is currently with Purchasing.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. MULVANEY:

Autumn said the Mulvaney's needed to provide updated Farmland Assessment forms and updated signature pages. Rudy sent them to the Mulvaney's legal representative. The updated documents were returned and they have been submitted to the SADC for Green Light Approval.

B. DANARAY FARM GREEN LIGHT APPROVAL:

The Danaray Farm, which is the Municipal PIG Application in Frankford Township, received Green Light Approval on June 25th.

C. MONITORING UPDATES:

Autumn reported she and Rudy monitored 120 out of 130 farms. She does have few concerns and Chuck Rohr is looking into them. Autumn said that there are weddings being held at the Coster Gerard Farm in Vernon. There is a six-acre exception area on this farm; but Autumn said she has a concern because their online website says they can house up to 1,500 people. She said parking for 1,500 wedding guests could not be contained in the six-acre exception area because of where the buildings are. They also have a single family house outside of the exception area that they are using as a vacation rental. Susan Payne is reviewing this concern. Autumn said she will send a letter to the landowners reminding them that they are bound by the exception area, which includes parking and accessory structures.

There was a brief discussion on the status of the Allison Farm violations which were discovered during monitoring.

D. PRESERVATION APPLICATIONS:

The Lacz Farm application in Andover Borough is still being worked on. If the Board agrees, they need to revise the Ag. Development Area to include that parcel. The landowners are working with a consulting group. The farm is 20 acres and is located in the middle of the preserved Francisco farm. Autumn said she did some research to see if this property was already deed restricted, but could not find anything about the specific block and lot in the land record search through the County.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jane Brodhecker welcomed John Williams, the new County Counsel, John Williams introduced himself to the Board and said he is looking forward to working with them. He also said that he attended a Farmland Preservation closing during the interim period between when he was hired and Dennis McConnell was close to retiring.

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 8:05 p.m.