

SUSSEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

MINUTES

OCTOBER 19, 2015

The meeting opened at 7:37 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
Cece Pattison
Joan Snook Smith

STAFF PRESENT: Autumn Sylvester, Program Manager
Antoinette Wasiewicz, Recording Secretary

MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Brian Hautau to accept the Minutes of September 21, 2015 as presented. The motion was seconded by Joan Snook Smith. All were in favor, with an abstention from Lori Day. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:

A. ARTICLES OF INTEREST:

Autumn provided the Board with articles relating to the USDA's announcement of \$17 million to support American's beginning farmers and ranchers; the weather cutting into pumpkin crops; and hidden harvest rescues food, feeds families.

She also said she saw an article relating to small meat producers resolutions. The article was about amending the USDA regulations for slaughterhouses particularly for small producers in rural areas. This would allow farmers to get their meat processed at custom slaughterhouses that are inspected by USDA occasionally, they don't need inspectors overseeing daily operations. A short discussion followed after which the Board agreed to send a letter to Congressman Garrett or Frelinghuysen in support of the amendment.

B. SADC UPDATE:

The SADC provided an update on the following:

County Planning Incentive Grants – Sussex County has seven farms in application with Final Approval. It has encumbered or expended \$2,272,215 of its base grant, leaving a balance of \$234,083 of the total \$2.5 million allocated. There is a balance of approximately \$7.5 million in the competitive fund for the County FIG. Sussex County remains eligible for \$5 million in FY 13 Competitive Funds.

Municipal Planning Incentive Grants - In Frankford Township, the Sussex Farm and Horse Association is waiting for Final Approval. In Green Township, the Caretta Farm is waiting for Certification.

SADC Direct Easement Purchase – There are no current Direct Easement Applications in Sussex County.

Stefanie Miller reported that, in August, she and Autumn met with John Williams, Esq. to discuss the program and process. The four landowners who accepted the County's offer are waiting for final contracts. They hope to work with the County to close these farms before FY 2017.

At its September 24th meeting, the SADC clarified how long Certified Market Values (CMV) are valid for pre-acquisitions. A CMV may be used as the basis for an SADC Final Approval and cost-share grant if the CMV is no more than three years old at the time the county, municipality or nonprofit requests Final Approval, provided they pre-acquired the easement or fee simple title within 18 months of the CMV date.

SADC staff reviewed for the Committee its eFarm project – the development of a new online system for administering the SADC's programs, services and processes. The SADC is working to create a web-based system that will allow all program partners involved with projects to more easily collaborate, communicate and access information, as well as manage projects more efficiently.

AG. AGENT'S REPORT:

Steve Komar did not attend this evening's meeting, but he sent Autumn Pesticide Applicator Seminar information. Autumn provided the Board members with this information.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. CICERALE RIGHT TO FARM CERTIFICATION UPDATE:

Autumn said she heard back from the Zoning Officer after the last meeting. Mr. Cicerale's application was not for the lot that he was written the violation letter for. Mr. Cicerale had livestock on a parcel where agriculture is not a permitted use. He has owned a large portion of his farm since the 1980's, so he is allowed to continue farming operations on that portion. He purchased a new lot in 2015 which is adjoining, and this lot is not grandfathered.

B. FY 2013 APPLICATION UPDATE:

Autumn said she is still waiting for John Williams to get the contracts out. The Freeholders awarded the surveying contracts to Delaware Valley Associates and to Dykstra Associates.

C. SOIL DISTURBANCE LISTENING SESSION:

The Soil Disturbance Listening Session will be held at the next CADB meeting on November 16. Jeffrey Everett and Stefanie Miller from the SADC will attend the meeting to listen to comments, concerns and questions on soil disturbance.

D. SYBERG UPDATE:

The Land Conservancy of New Jersey is hoping to close on the Syberg Farm by the end of November. They have been in communication with John Williams to set up the closing.

E. STATE OPEN SPACE FUNDING:

At the State level, there are two Bills before the Legislature. One is to establish an ongoing formula from the Corporate Business Tax to allocate funding. The other Bill, which is currently in the Senate, is to reinstate the traditional split between Green Acres and Farmland Preservation.

F. FARMLAND PRESERVATION OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND REFERENDUM:

An informational mailer was prepared by the Trust for Public Land and it will be sent to voters to remind them that the question is on the ballot. Lori Day asked Autumn if there was a way she can put information about the Trust Fund Referendum on Facebook. Autumn said the County does have a Facebook page. Lori suggested that once it is on Facebook, she should notify the Board so they can share the information with their followers. Autumn said the FAQ Sheet is on the Ag. Development Board's website and the Open Space Committee's website. She said she will e-mail it to the Board.

Joan suggested getting someone from The Herald to publish an article about the Referendum. Autumn said Bruce Scruton wrote an article about the Referendum in March or April. Jane asked how much promotions can the Board do. Both the CADB and the Open Space Committee can promote the Referendum; however, staff cannot. Lori said she will call The Herald and suggest that they contact Autumn regarding the Referendum. Autumn said the Board can also write letters to the Editor, as individuals.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. HARVEST, HONEY & GARLIC FESTIVAL:

Autumn gave an update on the Harvest, Honey and Garlic Festival. She said it was a beautiful day and about 2,500 people attended the festival. There was a steady stream of people all day and there were more people there this year than last. She believes the advertising efforts are working.

Autumn said there is some extra money in the budget and that she is thinking of getting some new road signs made. The current signs say, "Harvest Festival" and they heard a few complaints that people didn't associate the sign with the Harvest, Honey and Garlic Festival. They complained that there were no signs. Autumn said 50 signs will cost about \$395.00.

B. FY 2017 PIG APPLICATION:

Autumn reported that she sent out the FY 2017 PIG Application letters to all the municipalities to let them know that the County is applying and that if they have any questions or if they have anything that the County needs to be aware of, they should contact her office. The applications are due December 15. Autumn will meet with Dave Kunz next week to go over the GIS data.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Joan Snook Smith. The motion was seconded by Brian Hautau and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.