

SUSSEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 21, 2011

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
Cece Pattison

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Joan Snook Smith

STAFF PRESENT: Donna Traylor, CADB Coordinator
Antoinette Wasiewicz, Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Freeholder Liaison Rich Vohden
Peter Southway

There are three Board members whose terms expired on September 30, 2011. They will be reappointed at the November 30, 2011 Freeholder meeting. Therefore, this is an unofficial meeting.

MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:

Minutes were not available.

CORRESPONDENCE:

A. P. SOUTHWAY APPLICATION TO SCADB:

A letter was received from Peter Southway expressing his desire to serve on the Sussex County Agriculture Development Board.

B. OYF OF THE YEAR, DUCE TALLAMY:

A Press Release was received which announced Duce Tallamy from Wantage Township as New Jersey's 2012 Outstanding Young Farmer.

C. GREENLIGHT APPROVAL: KEYES, SADC, 11/7/11:

A letter was received from the SADC advising that they have reviewed the Keyes Farmland Preservation application. The application is complete and accurate and meets their minimum criteria. The SADC Green Light Approval Maps and the Quality Score Report were included.

D GREENLIGHT APPROVAL: C. MILLER/YELLOW IRIS #2, 11/7/11:

A letter was received from the SADC advising that they have reviewed the Cathy Miller/Yellow Iris Farm #2 Farmland Preservation application. The application is complete and accurate and meets their minimum criteria. The SADC Green Light Approval Maps and the Quality Score Report were included.

E. GREENLIGHT APPROVAL: M. MAZZA, 11/7/11:

A letter was received from the SADC advising that they have reviewed the Mario Mazza/MC Land Trust of Frankford Farmland Preservation application. The application is complete and accurate and meets their minimum criteria. The SADC Green Light Approval Maps and the Quality Score Report were included.

F. TAGGART WITHDRAWAL, 11/10/11:

Donna reported that a few days ago she received a letter from Patricia Taggart advising that she and Bill Taggart decided that they would like to withdraw their application for farmland preservation. The letter came after they received notification of the meeting for all applicants with County Counsel. She said that it would be impossible for them to attend any meetings due to Bill Taggarts health.

RIGHT TO FARM:

Donna said there was nothing new to report on Right to Farm.

RUTGERS AGRICULTURE AGENTS REPORT:

Donna said Steve Komar is doing "Annie's Project" this evening in South Jersey.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. AGRITOURISM UPDATES: CHRISTMAS TREE SURVEY:

Donna reported that in yesterday's paper there was an article about the Tourism Survey that the Chamber of Commerce just completed. That information will be disseminated in about two weeks. The Chamber of Commerce felt the study did not capture the true numbers of agritourism in the County.

Donna said she put together a simple form for Christmas tree growers to log in the zip codes of their customers and the number of people in their party. This will give her some statistical information of where people are coming from and how many people are coming into the County. From that she can estimate the amount of money they are spending in the County for the Christmas tree, lunch, gas, etc. This information is important when the Freeholders are making decisions regarding Farmland Preservation, etc. Donna added that each season she will try to identify a group and send out something similar to obtain feedback. Lori Day suggested that a form be placed near the cash register for customers to enter in their e-mail address, town, zip code and number in party.

B. EVERETT FARM, FRANKFORD TWP.: UPDATE:

Donna brought Peter Southway up to date on the Everett Farm violation. The Everett's had an apartment set up in the barn and after months of notices and warnings, a violation notice was issued. Donna said she recently received a letter with photographs where it appears that the barn is now empty; however, she has not been out to inspect it. County Counsel is trying to set up an inspection. If the violation is resolved, she will need to set up a regular inspection schedule with them, rather than a yearly monitoring.

C. UPDATE ON CLOSINGS AND FINAL APPROVALS:

Donna provided the Board with a State generated County PIG Program Status Tracking Report for all rounds through November 20, 2011. She reported that two staff members of the SADC came up today to review everything on the report. She discussed in detail the status of the farms as well as her meeting with SADC staff.

D. MONITORING UPDATE:

Donna said that with the relatively mild weather she has been getting as many farms monitored as possible. So far she has monitored 51 out of 168 farms. She said she uses the opportunity to answer any questions the farmers may have and also discusses new programs with them.

E. 2013 COUNTY PIG PROCESS:

Donna reported that she is in the process of updating the County's ten project areas. There is a great deal of paperwork involved and so far she is finished with two of the

ten. The deadline is December 15. She said there should not be that much of a change in statistics because there have not been as many closings this year as in the previous year. To date, 16,589 acres have been preserved with 162 farms, but this does not take into account some of the subdivisions of premises. According to the State's statistics, from May 1985 to June 30, 2011, there are 13 towns, 126 farms and 13,744 acres that closed with State funds. These figures do not include farms that closed with County dollars.

F. LAND CONSERVANCY OF NJ – FARM APPLICATION UPDATE:

Donna said that depending on how successful tomorrow night's meeting with County Counsel and the applicants is, the Board may want to start discussing whether they want to use ancillary fund reimbursement to pursue the preservation of the six farms with the Land Conservancy of New Jersey. She will put this on December's agenda.

Donna reminded the Board that when they discussed this at a previous meeting, it was suggested that the Land Conservancy pay 75% and the County 25%. According to the State, their funding cannot be more than 50% for grants to non-profits on any given farm.

There is going to be another round of Federal funding for the State in January. Two County farms may be appropriate to send in for Federal funds. If approved, the federal program can pay up to 50% of the easement and the County can ask the State to fund 50% from the block grant or the competitive dollars.

G. UPDATE ON OYF APPLICATIONS:

The Board suggested some Outstanding Young Farmer of the Year nominations. Rudy reviewed the nominees and it appears all three have the age qualifications. The nominees were Raj Sinha, Tore Anderson and Michael (Cully) Opilla. Donna will prepare a cover letter and submit the three names.

H. SUBDIVISION OF PREMISES REQUEST – ELIZABETH COSH, WANTAGE TWP.:

Donna said the last time this Board talked about the subdivision of premises request from Ernie and Marilyn Cosh, Brian Smith from the State suggested that the Board needed to expand on the reasons for the request. He suggested that Donna review one of the old requests. Donna pulled the Ricker request for subdivision of premises and she read a portion to the members. "It was determined that the division was for an agricultural purpose and would create two agriculturally viable parcels such that each is capable of maintaining a variety of agricultural operations that yield a reasonable economic return under conditions solely from the parcel's agricultural output." This request was approved by the SADC.

The application for the Cost subdivision of premises gave statistical information about tillable soils, said that each farm has existing housing opportunities and they have been farmed individually from the beginning. Freeholder Liaison Rich Vohden suggested that she add the language from the Ricker application verbatim. Donna said she will add another "Whereas" to the Resolution. The Board will officially recommend

the Subdivision of Premises at their December meeting and then it will be sent to the State.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. 8-YEAR PROGRAM RENEWAL, VAN WINGERDEN, FRANKFORD TWP.:

The Van Wingerden farm in Frankford Township is a permanently preserved farm. Before going into the permanent program, they were in the 8-Year Program. The 8-Year Program has lapsed and the Van Wingerden's decided to renew their 8-Year Program. Donna said she would prepare a formal Resolution.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Freeholder Liaison Rich Vohden said Green Township is working on their Farmland Preservation Comprehensive Plan. They were asked how they felt about allowing public access to preserved farms in their plan. The Mayor was against it.

Peter Southway said in Bergen County the Administrator insisted that the County would fund the preservation of a farm only if there was public access to the farm. The farm owner withdrew the application. Donna said about eight to ten years ago Senator Littell supported a Bill that supported public access to preserved farms. It was pulled after one day.

ADJOURNMENT:

All business having been completed, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Lori Day. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.