

SUSSEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

MINUTES

DECEMBER 21, 2015

The meeting opened at 7:30 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
Jim Hunt
Cece Pattison

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Joan Snook Smith

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

ALSO PRESENT: Freeholder Liaison Richard Vohden

MINUTES CORRECTION/APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Cece Pattison to accept the Minutes of October 19, 2015 as presented. The motion was seconded by Lori Day. All were in favor, with an abstention from Jim Hunt. Motion carried.

The Minutes of November 15, 2015 will be corrected to show that the meeting was opened by Vice Chairperson Lori Day. A motion was made by Lori Day to accept the Minutes of November 15, 2015 with the above-noted correction. The motion was seconded by Cece Pattison. All were in favor, with an abstention from Jane Brodhecker. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:

A. ARTICLES OF INTEREST:

Autumn provided the Board with articles relating to the preservation of the Syberg Farm in Stillwater; and the 2016 Annual State Agricultural Convention and the New Jersey Agricultural Convention and Trade Show.

AG. AGENT'S REPORT:

Steve Komar was not present at this evening's meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. FISCAL YEAR 2013 APPLICATION UPDATE:

Autumn reported that she sent out contracts to the four farms that accepted their offers. Two of the contracts have been returned, Paladino and Duddy. She is still waiting for signed contracts from Gianatassio and Lane Libby Mountainview farm. The surveys are almost complete for Paladino and Duddy.

B. SYBERG UPDATE:

Autumn reported that the Syberg farm closed on Thursday, December 10. This farm was acquired through a bargain sale. Instead of paying \$295,000, the County provided \$263,000 for the land and \$9,000 for professional costs.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. MULVANEY APPRAISAL:

The Mulvaney farm received Green Light Approval in November. Autumn said she confirmed the two quotes for Appraisal Services of North Jersey and Landmark 1. Once the appraisals are received and we receive the certified market value from the SADC, the County can make the landowner an offer.

B. DANARAY CMV:

A Certified Value in the amount of \$4,600 per acre was received for the DanaRay farm. The County agreed to provide \$10,000 for this acquisition.

C. FOUR SEASONS OF AGRICULTURE STORYMAP:

Autumn reported that she and Rudy have been working with the GIS consultant to make a web-based version of the Four Seasons of Agriculture Brochure. Rudy said they are using the file that went to the printer to print the brochure for the data to establish the storymap. Each farm will have an icon with a picture, that can be clicked on. They expect the storymap to be completed in about a month or so.

D. 2017 SADC PIG APPLICATION:

Autumn sent a copy of the PIG Application to the Board but not the individual project area summary report because they are lengthy. The average price per acre has dropped, so the total amount of money for the target farms has dropped by about \$5 or \$6 million.

E. 2015 FPP APPLICATION RANKINGS:

The Board was provided with a sheet listing the three farms that they visited. They are ranked as VanWingerden-#1, Lacey-#2 and Stephens-#3. They ranked higher than 70% of the average, which is about 37 points. Rudy said there are some issues and that if the people who visited were asked, they would probably rank them in the reverse order. She said some of the numbers are a little misleading. The Lacey farm does not have any prime soils; therefore he received 0 points out of 15. However, that does not mean he can't grow a crop or pasture his horses. Jim said it also gets skewed a little based on the total acreage and total tillable because it is a smaller parcel. Rudy said the local commitment is also very low on that farm because it is in Andover Borough. The Stephens farm has a lot of prime soil but his tillable acreage is low because he is not growing anything at this point. His Farm Assessment Form says it is all pasture. Rudy said there is also a density factor on this farm. He is not within a half a mile of another preserved farm.

Jim said he may have missed the meeting, and asked if these three farms have been officially approved by the Board for preservation. The Board said they have not yet been approved for preservation. Autumn said she wanted to give the Board additional information to base their decision on if they wanted to pursue these farms. Jim said he thinks the Board ought to first decide which farms they want to pursue before ranking them and that this should be done with a full Board present. Autumn agreed that the full Board should be present.

F. APPROVAL OF 2016 MEETING DATES FOR THE SCADB:

The Board was provided with the Sussex County Agriculture Development Board's meeting dates for 2016.

MOTION:

A motion was made by Lori Day to approve the 2016 Meeting Dates for the SCADB as presented. The motion was seconded by Jim Hunt and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Freeholder Liaison Rich Vohden asked if the Caretta's have pulled their Farmland Preservation Application with the Land Conservancy. Autumn said she has not received official word that Caretta's have backed out. Rudy has contacted the Land Conservancy, who in turned called the Caretta's. The farm is on the market, but they are still interested.

Freeholder Vohden also said that the Highlands Council is doing a study to see the impact that the Highlands Act had on the value of preserved farms in the preservation area. He asked Autumn for some data. Autumn said if the owner is pre-Highlands Act, they are still allowed to use the pre-Highlands value. She said she will look through the appraisal reports. Some discussion followed.

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 8:30 p.m.