

MINUTES OF THE MERCER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MEETING HELD MONDAY, APRIL 4, 2022
IN THE EXTENSION SERVICE BUILDING
1440 PARKSIDE AVENUE, EWING, N.J.
****Meeting via Zoom online platform due to Covid-19****

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Steve Jany called this meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

II. COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

Ms. Floyd announced that pursuant to the Sunshine Law, notice of this meeting was mailed to the Trenton Times and the Trentonian, and was posted on the County Planning Department's website, including a public zoom meeting link and instructions.

III. ROLL CALL

A. Voting Members:

Mr. Steve Jany, Chair – Present
Mr. Frank D'Amico, Vice-Chair – Present
Mr. Scott Ellis – Present
Ms. Laurie Emde – Present
Mr. Gary Mount – Present
Ms. Kristine Walsh – Present
Ms. Theodora Wang – Present

B. Non-voting Members:

Mr. Bill Agress/County Planning Board Liaison – Absent
Ms. Meredith Melendez/Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension – Present

C. Others Present:

Ms. Leslie Floyd/Mercer County Planning Director
Ms. Lisa K. Fritzinger/Assistant Planning Director
Ms. Mandelbaum/Regional Acquisition Coordinator, SADC

IV. REORGANIZATION

Ms. Floyd called for nominations for Chair. Mr. Ellis nominated Mr. Jany, Ms. Emde seconded the nomination. Mr. Jany was unanimously elected Chair.

Mr. Mount nominated Mr. D'Amico for Vice Chair, Ms. Emde seconded the nomination. Mr. D'Amico was unanimously elected Vice Chair.

Mr. Jany nominated Ms. Fritzinger as Interim Secretary, Mr. D'Amico seconded the nomination. Ms. Fritzinger was unanimously elected Interim Secretary.

Mr. D'Amico nominated Ms. Susan Bacso for Board Attorney. Ms. Emde seconded the nomination. Ms. Bacso was unanimously elected Board Attorney.

Meeting Schedule; The following 2022 schedule was adopted.

- **March 7, 2022 ***Meeting Cancelled**
- **April 4, 2022**
- **May 2, 2022 ***Meeting Cancelled*****
- **June 6, 2022**
- *No regular meeting in July*
- **August 1, 2022**
- *No regular meeting in September*
- **October 3, 2022**
- *No regular meeting in November*
- **December 5, 2022**
- **February 6, 2023 - Annual Reorganization Meeting**

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Mount and seconded by Mr. D’Amico, the minutes of the October 4, 2021 regular meeting were unanimously approved.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE: None

VIII. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

A. SADC:

Ms. Mandelbaum reported that she is continuing to work with the County staff on current projects. The SADC will be celebrating 40 years in 2022. The SADC staff is still working on the Soil Protection Standards, which will be presented at the April SADC meeting. It will then be published in the NJ Register. She also announced that the 2021 monitoring was the best year ever with the most farms monitored. Special Occasion Events legislation is being worked on. There is a consideration that the counties will administer SOE on preserved farmland and the number of events that would be permitted on a farm per year would be dependent upon income. The SADC is looking for ways to attract participation in the program. She will update the Board when there is more information on SOE legislation. Ms. Floyd raised concerns about the ability of the counties to administer SOE on 90 farms.

B. Land Development Activity:

There are no land development applications on the upcoming County Planning Board agenda within the Agricultural Development Area (ADA).

C. Farmland Preservation Updates:

Ms. Floyd reported on the county projects:

Chowdhury: The County closed on the Chowdhury farm. The SADC determined that, due to the pre-closing subdivision of the property, there isn’t remaining development value and therefore State funds will not be made available to the County.

Wert: When the SADC has a recommendation regarding the erosion on the Wert farm the County will update the appraisal and apply for SADC funds.

Kerr: The County needs to provide the survey and some other documents to the SADC.

Ms. Floyd expressed that the SADC program has become even more challenging. The proposal to require potential erosion violations be fixed before closing is an example. Ms. Mandelbaum

appreciated the concerns. She responded that the stewardship side of the program is over-burdened and this is to prevent closing on a farm that then immediately has a violation that needs to be fixed. The concern from the County is that it creates another hoop to go through at the end of the purchase and has the potential to terminate the deal with the landowner. It will be a problem in the acquisition side of the program.

IX. OLD BUSINESS: None

X. NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Floyd reported that the County has hired a consulting firm to do the 2022 farm monitoring. The firm is Pinto Consulting. The prime consultant is Frank Pinto and he has two others on his team. All team members have worked in the farmland preservation program and have done monitoring in other counties. We will send you the schedule. If you wish to join them on any of the visits that can be arranged. The visits will take place starting this week and ending mid-May. We met with two of the consultants at Mr. Jany's farm last week to do a test monitoring visit. Mr. Jany reported that they were reasonable and knowledgeable and that they had discussions about their experience with monitoring and the preservation program. The consultants will attend a future Board meeting to report on their findings.

XI. DISCUSSION:

Mr. Ellis reported that NRS is drafting the NJ Strategic Plan and they are inviting public input.

XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None was required.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:05 pm. The next scheduled meeting of the MCADB is June 2, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa K. Fritzinger
Interim CADB Secretary

Date adopted:

Attachments, if any, are made a part of the permanent record and are filed in the Minute Book, and are located in the Mercer County Planning Department Office. All copies are available upon request.