

## MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE MERCER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
MEETING HELD MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 2022  
IN THE EXTENSION SERVICE BUILDING  
1440 PARKSIDE AVENUE, EWING, N.J.

***\*\*Meeting via Zoom online platform due to Covid-19\*\****

### **ATTENDANCE:**

#### **A. Voting Members:**

Mr. Jany, Chair – Present  
Mr. Frank D’Amico, Vice-Chair – Present  
Mr. Scott Ellis – Present  
Mr. Gary Mount – Present  
Ms. Kristine Walsh – Absent  
Ms. Theodora Wang – Present  
Ms. Emde – Absent  
Mr. Elllis – Absent

#### **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. Susan Bacso/ Board Counsel  
Mr. Dave Kimmel/SADC  
Mr. Charles Roohr/SADC  
Mr. Kevin Johnson  
Mr. Dan Pace

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair 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 was posted on the County Planning Department’s website, including a public zoom meeting link and instructions.

### **III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion by Mr. D’Amico and seconded by Ms. Wang, the minutes of the June 6, 2022 regular meeting were unanimously approved.

### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.**

### **V. CORRESPONDENCE: None**

### **VI. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS**

**A. SADC:**

Mr. Roohr reported that 2022 was a good year for farmland preservation. Seventy- seven farms and 6,000 plus acres were preserved, many from the direct state easement program.

**B. Land Development Activity: No Report**

**C. Farmland Preservation Updates:**

Ms. Floyd reported that the county has begun appraisals for the Wert property. The Kerr property is under SADC review.

**VII. OLD BUSINESS: None**

**VIII. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Gres/Johnson house and driveway request**

Ms. Floyd referred to the site plan provided. Mr. Johnson, contract purchaser of the preserved Gres farm, is proposing to build a house in the exception area. This Deed of Easement does not contain a house size limitation. In accordance with SADC Policy P-41, Mr. Johnson requires CADB and SADC approval for the proposed driveway to access the exception area. Following a site visit, SADC staff determined that the farm is overgrown, and staff is unwilling to consider the proposal until the property is compliant with the easement. The driveway is before the CADB for approval. Mr. Johnson understands the issue and will bring the farm up to SADC standards. Mr. Johnson is proposing low bollard lights along the driveway for safety, but no decorative trees will be permitted. Mr. Johnson would like to begin house construction and have a year to clear the land. Mr. D'Amico made a motion to approve the concept with the condition of clearing the site to SADC Standards and SADC approval. Ms. Wang seconded the motion. Ms. Floyd noted that a resolution would be drafted and circulated to the CADB. The resolution will also include any pertinent conditions from the previous driveway approval granted to Mr. Gres in 2014. The motion was approved with Mr. Mount and Mr. Ellis abstaining.

**B. Patricelli Proposal**

Ms. Floyd presented an aerial map of the Patricelli farm Block 62 Lots 2.02 and 3 in Hopewell Township. The property contains a large a house and a smaller house. The property is listed for \$4,300,000. The County advised the seller earlier this year that we would not have an interest in the houses. Therefore, Patricelli developed a conceptual subdivision plan to create new lots for the houses and preserve the balance of approximately 96 acres. It is a targeted farm with good soils. It will most likely be a fee purchase, then sold at auction. It connects to other open space and preserved farmland. Ms. Floyd asked for Board input. The Board was in support of the proposal. Ms. Floyd will bring it back to the Board if the County pursues it.

**C. Soil Protection Standards**

Mr. Roohr from the SADC presented the Board with an update on the Soil Protection Standards. There have been several changes that he outlined.

- 1) Excavation exceptions allow cut and fill for conservation practices such as grass swales.
- 2) Water issue exemptions to address offsite impacts not a result of farming actions.
- 3) Large temporary tents allowed for 4-6 months. Small tents for pick your own up to 2,000 sf no time limit.
- 4) Rowan will be providing mapping of all the farms to show coverage and categories. Farmer can review and respond to SADC to correct map. SADC Hopes to have all the maps by the

end of the year. Sample maps are being sent in September to 50 farms in the state that have the most disturbance. He is not sure if any of them are in Mercer.

- 5) Rehabilitation Standards allow an increase in the disturbance % by rehabilitating an area and removing it from the disturbed area.
- 6) Aggregations of Farms. There are farms that are already at the 12% disturbance. Farms can be combined if they are owned by the same farmer and adjacent to each other. This allows for the disturbance to be based on the aggregate, which in some case may decrease if the adjacent farm is less disturbed.

The Board had concerns about the changing rules without compensation as well as the timing and resolution of mapping disputes. Mr. Janey reported that the State Board of Ag. has written a letter stating the opinion that the standards applied to past farmers is illegal. There is an overall concern about future farming in New Jersey and how these new standards will hurt future participation.

**IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None

**X. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None was required.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:40 pm. The next scheduled meeting of the MCADB is October 5, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa K. Fritzinger /DKB".

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.