

MINUTES OF THE MERCER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MEETING HELD MONDAY, December 5, 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 7:32 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. ROLL CALL

A. Voting Members:

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

B. Non-voting Members:

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

C. Others Present:

Ms. Leslie Floyd/Mercer County Planning Director
David Kimmel, SADC
Susan Bacso, MCADB Attorney

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Mount asked if anyone was contacted by Rowan about soil protection maps. Dave Kimmel states he will get the information.

On a motion by Mr. Mount and seconded by Ms. Walsh, the minutes of the August 1, 2022 regular meeting were unanimously approved. Mr. Jany abstained.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE: None

VII. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

A. SADC:

- 1.) Soil protection subcommittee meeting with State Board of Agriculture in mid-December to discuss proposed standards.
- 2.) New Deputy Executive Director, Charles Roohr.
- 3.) Cannabis production on preserved farmland discussed at last SADC meeting. Determined cannabis is an agricultural crop and can be grown on preserved farmland. It will remain

cannabis is an agricultural crop and can be grown on preserved farmland. It will remain ineligible under right to farm protection since it is still illegal federally.

- 4.) Ms. Floyd added that the SADC meeting included discussion of the Johnson driveway. The SADC approval was different than the county approval. It will be reviewed once the SADC adopted resolution is received.

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:

Kerr: The County has done pre-closing field visit. Ms. Bacso has provided additional documents to the state for review. Working towards closing.

Wert: Appraisal has been done. State has given a certified fair market value. Need to work with the state to get cost share agreement.

IX. OLD BUSINESS:

Farm Monitoring Updates:

Ms. Floyd advised that letters were sent to landowners with outstanding concerns. County is following up with owners.

X. NEW BUSINESS:

PIG letter or update needs to be sent to the SADC by December 15th. Ms. Floyd will be sending a letter advising there have been no changes to the ADA or adding any targeted farms. Mr. Jany made a motion to have Ms. Floyd send the SADC the letter for the PIG as status quo. Motion seconded by Mr. D'Amico and Ms. Walsh. Motion approved unanimously.

XI. DISCUSSION:

A. Mr. Jany reported on Assembly Bill A4729 – Assemblyman Alex Sauickie asking for support for bill that allows appraisers to use comparable sales outside of Highlands and Pinelands to be used in farmland preservation on those properties. Discussion regarding different appraisals and if appraisers have been included in the process of creating a new comp/appraisal method. Mr. Mount brought up question regarding ‘Item K’ where the SADC and the DEP make judgements about improvements on preserved land that diminishes protection of surface water or ground water. He questions if that is the expertise of the SADC. Ms. Floyd stated that it is not done in other appraisals. Mr. Jany states the towns for surrounding areas may want something in place to preserve the quality of the drinking water. Mr. Jany suggests sending MCADB concerns to the Bill sponsor and cc the Farm Bureau and other CADBs. Ms. Floyd states she can write a letter with Ms. Basco. Mr. Jany asked to entertain a motion to have Ms. Floyd and Ms. Bacso draft a response letter to send to the board to approve/disapprove/comment and send to the bill sponsor. Mr. Mount made motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Walsh. Motion approved unanimously.

B. Reorganization meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2023.

C. Ms. Floyd asked if members want to continue meetings via zoom or in-person. Mr. Jany

stated he is fine either way, but an in-person meeting may be better for meetings with lengthy discussion. Ms. Walsh asked if meetings could be hybrid. Ms. Floyd stated it may be technically difficult with current county equipment. Mr. Mount stated he feels hybrid is not successful. Mr. Ellis prefers in-person. Ms. Floyd stated there could be issues with advertising in time if a last-minute decision is made for the type of meeting. Mr. Jany stated if there are complicated issues to discuss, in-person would be more beneficial. It was decided meetings will continue as zoom and in-person as needed.

XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None was required.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Jany and seconded by Ms. Walsh the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:06 pm. The next scheduled meeting of the MCADB is February 6, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Jill Benner for Leslie Floyd
Created from Zoom recording

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.