

MINUTES OF THE MERCER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MEETING HELD MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023
IN THE EXTENSION SERVICE BUILDING
1440 PARKSIDE AVENUE, EWING, N.J.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Steve Jany called this meeting to order at 7:36 pm.

II. COMPLAINT STATEMENT WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Chairman Jany announced that pursuant to the Sunshine Law, notice of this meeting was mailed to the Trenton Times and posted on the County Planning Department's website.

III. ROLL CALL

a. Voting Members:

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

B. Non-voting Members:

Ms. Meredith Melendez/Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension – Present

C. Others Present:

Ms. Leslie Floyd/Mercer County Planning Director
Mr. David Kimmel, SADC
Ms. Susan Bacso, MCADB Attorney
Ms. Cindy Taylor, Mercer County Land Preservation Coordinator

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Ms. Wang and seconded by Mr. D'Amico, the minutes of the August 7, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved. Steve Jany abstained due to his absence at the August meeting.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

VI. CORRESPONDENCE: None

VII. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

a. SADC

A recording of the Soil Protection Standards hearing from September 27, 2023 is now available on the SADC website. Public comment for the standards are due by October 6. The common themes of the hearing were concerns regarding retroactivity, compensation for stricter guidelines, and curtailing future innovations.

b. Land Development

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

c. Farmland Preservation Updates

Kerr Farm: Should close by the end of the year. Seller's attorney was waiting for approval for driveway entrances from county road, which has been granted.

Wert Farm: Survey was submitted to the SADC. Once approved, staff will work to tie up any loose ends required for state reimbursement.

Public Auctions: Max Spann Auction Company is holding auctions to sell Chowdhury and Wert Farms on October 26, 2023. Property previews will be held October 5th and 12th. Properties will be sold with a standard Deed of Easement held by the County.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

a. Farm monitoring updates

Ms. Floyd recapped that the County's monitoring consultant, Frank Pinto, and new staff member Cindy Taylor will revisit farms that required action after the 2023 routine monitoring visits. The sites that require follow-up include:

1. Perrine
2. Liang
3. Guzikowski
4. Takter (David Kimmel will provide contact information for Department of Agriculture staff that may provide guidance on manure management.)
5. BAPS (County staff to share MCADB's resolution regarding their SOE request with David Kimmel.)
6. Dakota/Wojcik (2)

b. Bent Iron Brewery: SSAMP public hearing rescheduled to Dec 4, 2023

c. Soil Protection Standards public comment period

Ms. Floyd asked if the board wanted to provide additional comments beyond the letter Mercer CADB signed with Atlantic CADB, Cape May CADB, Cumberland CADB, Hunterdon CADB, Middlesex CADB, Morris CADB, Somerset CADB, and Sussex CADB. Mr. Jany suggested staff draft a public comment that addresses retroactivity of impervious coverage. Mr. D'Amico made a motion for staff to draft such a letter, Mr. Jany seconded, and it was passed unanimously.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

a. Update to bylaws and board policies

Staff provided a list of adopted policies and example policies that other counties use for board members to review and consider. There was discussion and general agreement to change the preservation ranking to allow consideration of farms smaller than 25 acres and adjacent to any conserved land (not necessarily farmland). Ms. Basco suggested staff initially focus on revising the bylaws and Code of Ethics and creating a policy for Special Events. Board members supported this suggestion. The bylaws and policies will be brought before the CADB at upcoming meetings.

X. DISCUSSION

- a. Staff discussed its use of Landscape Conservation Software for property management. Mr. Ellis requested a demo of this program at a future meeting, and the rest of members supported this request.

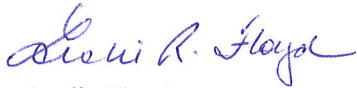
XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None required.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

- a. On a motion by Mr. D'Amico and seconded by Mr. Ellis, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:30 pm. The next scheduled meeting of the MCADB is December 4, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Leslie Floyd
Acting CADB Secretary