

MINUTES OF THE MERCER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD
MEETING HELD TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2024
IN THE EXTENSION SERVICE BUILDING
1440 PARKSIDE AVENUE, EWING, N.J.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair D'Amico called this meeting to order at 19:30.

II. COMPLIANCE STATEMENT WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Vice-Chair D'Amico announced that pursuant to the Sunshine Law, notice of all 2024 meetings was mailed to the Trenton Times on February 15, 2024 and posted on the County Planning Department's website.

III. ROLL CALL

a. Voting Members:

Mr. Steve Jany, Chair – not present
Mr. Frank D'Amico, Vice-Chair – present
Mr. Scott Ellis – present
Mr. Gary Mount –not present
Ms. Theodora Wang – present
Ms. Emily Blackman –present

B. Non-voting Members:

Ms. Meredith Melendez/Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension – present
Mr. William Agress, County Planning Board Liaison –present

C. Others Present:

Mr. Dave Kimmel, SADC
Ms. Daphne Bacon, SADC
Ms. Maria Connolly, Mercer County Planning Director
Ms. Cindy Taylor, Mercer County Land Preservation Coordinator
Ms. Diane Kottas, Mercer County CADB Administrator
Ms. Annette Loveless

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Ms. Wang, the minutes of the August 5, 2024 meeting were approved unanimously. Ms. Blackman abstained due to her absence.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

VI. CORRESPONDENCE: Held to Farmland Preservation Updates

VII. COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

a. SADC

Ms. Bacon and Mr. Kimmel reported that the State Formula Value was on track to have draft language & rules by the fall with possible implementation in the spring. They also reported that the amended Soil Protection Standards comment period was closing on September 13, 2024.

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

Monitoring:

Britton: Carri Young, Britton Industries Director of Business Development has provided County Staff with responses to the Board's inquiry into the source of the dirt used in the racetrack, the purpose of the excavated pond, and the purpose of a large building of indeterminate use. A non-majority of Board members, Staff and representatives of the SADC will revisit the farm on September 23.

Patel: Staff reported that during the last monitoring visit there was no obvious clearing of the overgrown nursery stock had occurred. Board asked Staff to send a violation letter to the Patels giving them two months to develop a written remediation plan with a timeline of goals and provide said plan to the CADB.

Johnson: Staff reported that Mr. Johnson has not provided the Board with a written remediation plan as of yet. The Board directed Staff to send a letter to Mr. Johnson giving him one month to submit a plan or be considered out of compliance. Staff will also remind Mr. Johnson that construction on a driveway or residence cannot begin until a written plan has been received.

Doerler: Staff reported that Mr. Doerler has sold his landscaping business which operates on the premises and that there is no longer any agricultural product being grown on the premises for use in the business. The Board directed Staff to send a letter to Mr. Doerler that operating the business on the premises was allowed in the past since he was the owner/operator and was growing product for the business, but that since this is no longer the case, the practice is not allowed.

Kosek: Staff reported that during the annual visit, Ms. Kosek identified an ~11 acre portion of the premises that is no longer being maintained due to an inability to get to the area. It was decided that Staff will conduct a follow up visit to more closely inspect the area and look for other access points to the area.

Lanwin: Staff reported that as viewed from a neighboring property, a ~5 acre field at the rear of the property has become overgrown is not being maintained. Staff were unable to access the area directly from the premises due to wet conditions. The Board directed Staff to conduct a follow up visit to get a closer look at the area.

Gentile: Staff reported that a realtor contacted the Planning Department with questions about a division of premises. Staff sent an SADC FAQ sheet in response.

Procaccini: Staff reported that Friends of West Windsor Open Space relayed that they along with the Township are interested in the County contacting the targeted Procaccini Farm to determine their interest in preservation. Staff will send a "targeted farm" letter of interest to the landowner.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- a. SSAMP Policy revisions:** On a motion by Ms. Blackman and seconded by Ms. Wang, the Board unanimously approved the minor language revisions to the previously adopted SSAMP Policy.
- b. Bellemont Farm Brewery SSAMP Resolution:** Board members were previously provided with a draft resolution for approval of the Bellemont Farm Brewery SSAMP application. There was discussion that the Board should avoid taking specific responsibility for enforcement of other entities rules and regulations. It was agreed upon that the CADB resolution should simply state that the provisions of the OFDM-AMP and rules and regulations of Hopewell Township and the ABC must be complied with. Ms. Kottas stated she would change the section of the resolution that covered this matter and resubmit to the Board for their review. On a motion by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Ms. Wang, the Board approved the resolution unanimously with the discussed changes. Amended resolution was distributed electronically for approval.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Enforcement Policy:** The Board requested that the revised policy be sent to the SADC for review.

X. DISCUSSION: Ms. Taylor reported to the Board that the Mercer County hunting policies have recently changed.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None required

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

- a.** Vice-Chair D'Amico adjourned the meeting at 21:38. The next scheduled meeting of the MCADB is October 7, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Kottas

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Secretary to the Board