



## **SOMERSET - UNION SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Somerset County 4-H Center  
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### **SOMERSET-UNION S.C.D. DISTRICT MEETING October 26, 2016**

**PRESENT:** Mark Kirby, Bob Amberg, Matt Loper, Steve Needle, Melissa Bright, Frank Calo

**ABSENT:** Jim Laine

#### **CALL to ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m.

#### **PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE**

#### **COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

The meeting was conducted in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

#### **APPROVAL of MINUTES**

A motion was made by Bob Amberg to approve the September meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

The report for September was reviewed by the Board. Steve Needle made a motion to approve the report. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed by the Board.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

- The District received a copy of a letter sent to The Honorable Chris Christie, NJ Governor, stating that the USDA had placed a designation of Secretarial natural disaster to 11 counties in NJ. These included Union and Somerset counties. A Secretarial disaster designation makes farm operators in these primary counties eligible to be considered for certain assistance from the Farm Services Agency.

The District received a notice from the NJ Association of Conservation Districts requesting any resolutions the Board may want to put forth for the December 12<sup>th</sup> regular meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

FY 2016 District Audit – The District Manager updated the Board on the status of the FY2016 District Audit. Frank Calo had previously sent the Board members a copy of the draft audit for their review. The final audit was to be completed by the auditor prior to this Board meeting but, was delayed due to the auditor not receiving a confirmation letter from Somerset County. The District had contacted the county and the letter has been forwarded to the auditor. The Board reviewed the draft audit and as per the auditors recommendation decided to approve the audit pending the final confirmation response. A motion was made by Steve Needle to approve the audit as per the final confirmation response stipulation. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved by the Board.

NJ Soil Restoration Standards – Frank Calo informed the Board that at last week's District Personnel Liaison Meeting, the District was presented with a draft of the self-certification form associated with the new soil restoration standards. The form was reviewed and discussed by the Board. The Boards main concern was what the District's liability would be with a document which was "self-certifying". The District Manager told the Board that he had expressed the same concern at the Liaison meeting. The document will be reviewed by the State Attorney General for completeness. The Board will be kept informed as the process moves forward.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

NJ State Dairy Princess Competition – Miss Melissa Bright, Somerset County Dairy Princess, spoke to the Board about the upcoming NJ State Dairy Princess Competition. The competition is sponsored by the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council. Miss Bright discussed how the Dairy princesses are an important part of ADADC's Communications team. They take part in a number of activities to help bridge the gap between farmers and consumers. She talked about her background and her activities since becoming the Somerset County Dairy Princess. The Board thanked her for coming to the meeting and wished her well in the NJ State Dairy Princess competition.

Training Sub-Committee Survey – The District Manager distributed to the Board a survey to be completed by the members to determine the training needs of the Soil Conservation Board Supervisors. Frank Calo reminded the Board that he was a member of the Training Sub-Committee and that the committee was working on possible training opportunities for the supervisors and staff of the Soil Conservation Districts in the state.

2016 NACD Membership Dues – Frank Calo informed the Board that the District had received an invoice for the 2016 NACD dues. The Board was also given a copy of the NACD newsletter dated October 1<sup>st</sup>. Matt Loper made a motion to pay the \$500 dollar dues for 2016 to the NACD. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed by the Board.

Annual Conservation Partnership Meeting – The Board was informed that the Annual Conservation Partnership meetings would be held at the same venue as this year. The meetings will take place at the end of March or the beginning of April of 2017. The District Manager will keep the Board updated as more information is provided by the State.

December Luncheon Meeting – The Board reviewed possible venues for the December luncheon meeting to be held in Union County. Supervisor Bob Amberg recommended Giovanna's in Plainfield. Also discussed, was the possibility of going to the Stage House Tavern in Scotch Plains. Supervisor Steve Needle suggested that if a venue in Union County could not be found he would be willing to return to last year's meeting venue of the Girasole Restaurant in Bound Brook. The Board will make a final decision as to a location at the November District Meeting.

Conservation Plans – Frank Calo presented to the Board, for their approval, 1 conservation plan and 1 request for assistance. A motion was made by Matt Loper to enter into closed session. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed. The Board entered into closed session at 8:09 p.m. The regular meeting resumed at 8:19 p.m. A motion was made by Bob Amberg to approve the conservation plans and request for assistance. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

District Action on Chapter 251 – (a) A motion was made by Bob Amberg to approve the plans on the attached certified list. The motion was seconded and the Board unanimously approved the plans on the certified list. Matt Loper recused himself from voting on application # 2016-2344. (b) A motion was made by Steve Needle to approve the plans on the attached completed list. The motion was seconded and the Board unanimously approved the completed plans on the attached list.

## **REPORTS:**

NRCS – Frank Calo reported about NRCS's agriculture outreach in Union County. NRCS attended several outreach events with direct producers in Union County, the Growing Power-Urban Ag Workshop, the NJ Urban Mayor's Conference, and the Liberty Hall Farm Community Garden Dinner. NRCS is working with Liberty Hall Farm, and Groundwork Elizabeth, fostering community gardens. Liberty Hall Farm will most likely be a 2<sup>nd</sup> round EQIP applicant. There is also a possible FY2017 proposal in discussion, headed by Groundwork Elizabeth/Liberty Hall Farm, to support Union County Community gardeners and urban farmers.

SCD – Frank Calo reported on his chapter 251 activities. He also discussed his current work with the Training Sub-Committee. He has been asked to aid with the construction of this year’s exhibit for the State Flower Show. The District will also be contacting the 4-H Association to discuss extending the District’s lease and possible upgrades to the District office space. The lease is due to expire at the end of the year.

**NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 16, 2016, at 11:30 AM at the District office.

A motion was made by Bob Amberg to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Calo  
District Manager

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