

Minutes of the June 24, 2019
Somerset County Agriculture Development Board
Somerset County Administration Building
20 Grove Street, Somerville, NJ
3rd. Fl. Freeholder's Meeting Room

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the June 24, 2019 Somerset County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) Meeting began at 8:00 AM at the Somerset County Administration Building, 20 Grove Street, Somerville, NJ in the 3rd Floor Freeholder's Conference Room.

Members in Attendance

Mark Kirby, Chairman
W. Peter Staats, Vice Chairman
Richard Norz
J. Johnson, Secretary
Edward Seidel
Frank Calo

Members Absent

Laura DePrado

Somerset County Staff

Walter Lane, Dir., Planning Division
Anthony McCracken, Assis. Dir., Planning Div.
Cathy Bunting, Admin. Assistant, Planning Div.
Angela Jupin, Deputy County Counsel

Public

Stefanie Miller, SADC

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2019 CADB meeting was made by Peter Staats and was seconded by Ed Seidel. Richard Norz abstained from the vote and the motion was passed and carried.

There was no public comment.

I-1) Somerset County Preservation Plan –Update

Walter Lane informed the Board that there was a Steering Committee Meeting held on June 6, 2019, where draft strategies and goals for the plan were discussed. Regarding the agriculture portion he explained that the goal of preserving 16,000 acres would remain. The equine industry and the farm belt concept, which would consider properties smaller than the original 25 acre minimum, were also discussed.

The Board was informed that on June 26, 2019 at 7:00 PM the Public meeting would be held and that after the meeting staff hopes to finalize the draft plan elements for the Steering Committee and CADB's review for an adoption later in the year or beginning of next year.

Chairman Mark Kirby expressed that he felt it was important to have a wild life management plan included for open space and historic grounds on past, present, and future properties.

Richard Norz also brought up the issue of noxious weeds and the need for it to be addressed.

I-2) SADC Meeting-Update

Stefanie Miller from the SADC provided the following updates from the SADC with the Board;

- Currently working on the FY20 County round appropriations. There will not be as many base grants offered, including to Somerset, however, that there will be available funding from the competitive funding pot.
- Funding through County and Municipal Planning Incentive Grants.
- The state direct program has selected almost 2000 acres of farm applications for appraisals.
- The special occasion events committee has been meeting more frequently, planning on making recommendations towards the end of the summer.
- The corporate business tax percentages were passed by the assembly, including an extension of the Highlands dual appraisal process.
- Current applications

I-3) County/State Boards of Agriculture

County: The Board was informed that plans for the upcoming 27th Annual picnic were underway.

State: The Board was informed on the following regarding the State Board of Agriculture;

- Four more members were passed with Senate approval and are ready to join the Board.
- Regulations on sprinkler systems in Agriculture Labor Housing were discussed

I-4) Staff Comments

The Board reviewed proposed legislation (Senate No. 1277), that would provide limited civil liability immunity to farmers hosting agritourism activities. The Board discussed that farmers markets would not be included in this legislation however, Richard Norz explained that he is not opposed to the exclusion.

D-1) Potential Projects

Ackerman Property: The Board was informed that the owners of the Ackerman property have not been in touch with staff. There was no other information to provide.

D-2) Other Business

Richard Norz suggested moving the Board meetings to 7:00 PM for the summer months. The Board agreed to discuss this for the 2020 meeting schedule.

The Board inquired about the new member for the Board. Staff explained that the Freeholder's office is currently reviewing applications. Mark Kirby expressed urgency to fill the position.

D-3) Doyle (Hillsborough)

The Board was informed that appraisals for the Doyle property in Hillsborough have been received by staff and sent to the SADC. They agreed to discuss in Closed Session.

D-4) Grande (Branchburg)

The Board was told that the state has informed staff that the Grande parcel does not qualify for preservation due to a restriction that does not allow further subdivision based upon past municipal development approvals.

Richard Norz made a motion to send a letter to the property owners stating that because of the state's findings the CADB would be unable to move forward with their application for preservation. The motion was seconded by Peter Staats and it was passed and carried.

D-5) Dorn (Neshanic Station)

This item was discussed in Closed Session

D-6) Gund Farm (Franklin)

Tony McCracken informed the Board that the surveys have been completed. He explained that there is question as to where the access driveway will be placed on the non-severable exception area. He explained that staff has highlighted their suggestion of placement and both attorneys have been corresponding regarding the issue.

Staff informed both parties that it would be preferable to resolve the issue before the SADC gives green approval as a late determination would need separate SADC review and approval.

D-7) Chubb Resolution

Mr. McCracken provided the Board with a drafted resolution for the cost share to the Chubb/Ace property for easement purchase in Bedminster Township. He explained that the resolution that the Board previously approved had incorrect information. The Board reviewed the resolution.

A motion to rescind the previous resolution was made by Peter Staats and was seconded by Ed Seidel. Richard Norz abstained, the motion was passed and carried.

A motion to approve the new resolution was made by Peter Staats and was seconded by J. Johnson. During the opportunity for discussion the Board suggested having the old resolution provided along with the new one so that the two can be prepared. There was one no vote and the motion was passed and carried.

D-8) Closed Session

A motion enter Closed Session was made by Richard Norz and was seconded Peter Staats. The motion was passed and carried and the Board entered Closed Session.

A motion to exit Closed Session was made by Richard Norz and was seconded by Peter Staats. The motion was passed and carried and the regular portion of the CADB meeting resumed.

D-9) Results and Actions from Closed Session

Meuller: A motion to direct staff to investigate potential easement violation on the Meuller property was made by Peter Staats and was seconded by Richard Norz. The motion was passed and carried.

D-10) Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Richard Norz and was seconded by Peter Staats. The motion was passed and carried and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by,

J.Johnson
Secretary/Treasurer