

Minutes of the November 23, 2020
Somerset County Agriculture Development Board
Virtual Meeting

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the November 23, 2020 Somerset County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) Meeting began at 8:00 AM. This meeting was held virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members in Attendance

Mark Kirby, Chairman
W. Peter Staats, Vice Chairman
Sandra Rhue, Secretary/Treasurer
Richard Norz
Laura DePrado
Ben Auletta
Melonie Marano, Freeholder Liaison

Somerset County Staff

Walter Lane, Dir., Planning Div.
Anthony McCracken, Asst. Dir., Planning Div.
Kate Katzer, Principal Planner, Planning Div.
Catherine Bunting, Admin. Assistant, Planning Div.
Thomas Boccino, Engineering
Greg Pasquale, Deputy County Counsel
Kevin Boris, County Counsel Staff

Public

Jim Petrucci, Fern Hill at Rooster Rock Farm
Ms. Dooley, Attorney for Mike Mueller

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the October 26, 2020 CADB meeting minutes was made by Laura DePrado and was seconded by Ben Auletta. The motion was passed and carried.

Public Comment

Norz Hill (Hillsborough): SSAMP Request: Kate Katzer explained that Richard Norz has applied for a SSAMP to convert his milking barn to a small kitchen to serve as a vegetable station. She explained that Mr. Norz is already working with the Township of Hillsborough to follow all proper procedures and that she has already inspected the property and saw no concerns.

When Mr. Norz addressed the Board to explain his plans, he first recused himself as a Board member and spoke solely as a business owner.

Ms. Katzer recommended moving forward with the approval of the SSAMP and the Board agreed to discuss further in Closed Session.

Fern Hill at Rooster Rock Farm (Peapack/Gladstone) – Commercial Farm Cert.: Kate Katzer explained that Jim Petrucci has applied for a Commercial Farm Cert. to identify his farm as a commercial operation. Mr. Petrucci shared with the Board the activities occurring on the farm. Ms. Katzer shared the very thorough documentation submitted by Mr. Petrucci.

Ms. Katzer recommended approving the Commercial Farm Certification, and the Board agreed to discuss further in Closed Session.

I-3) SADC Meeting – Update

The Board was informed that there was no November SADC meeting.

I-4) County/State Boards of Agriculture – Update

County: The Board was informed that the Annual Board of Agriculture dinner was held and that it was successful.

State: The Board was informed that the State Convention will be held in February.

I-5) Monitoring Fall 2020-Update

Ms. Katzer informed the Board that along with the Board member's help this year's monitoring has been completed and she is in the process of compiling the information to report to the Board.

I-6) Staff Comments

Ms. Katzer explained that the Mueller case was added to the agenda just that past Friday after his attorney requested that he be allotted more time for his agreed upon clean up. The Board agreed to discuss the issue in Closed Session.

Walter Lane informed the Board that the Steering Committee would be meeting that afternoon to discuss the Historic Preservation and Open Space portions of the preservation plan. He also explained that there has been a nomination for the vacancy on the Board and that the Freeholders will review it at their next meeting which will be held next week.

Motion to enter Closed Session

A motion to enter Closed Session was made by Laura DePrado and was seconded by Ben Auletta. The motion was passed, and the Board entered Closed Session.

Richard Norz exited the meeting during any discussions regarding his SSAMP request.

D-5) Results and Actions from Closed Session

Mueller: Peter Staats made a motion approving a 60-day extension for remediation on the Mueller property, under the condition a written narrative of Mr. Mueller's progress is received within one week from the meeting. The Board also agreed to provide a survey marking the areas that need to be cleaned up. The motion was seconded by Laura DePrado and was passed and carried.

Norz Hill Farm: A motion to approve Mr. Norz's request for an SSAMP was made by Ben Auletta and was seconded by Laura DePrado. Richard Norz recused himself from the vote and Peter Staats abstained from the vote. The motion was passed and carried.

Fern Hill Farm: A motion to approve the request for a Commercial Farm Certification on the Fern Hill Farm was made by Peter Staats and was seconded by Ben Auletta. The motion was passed and carried.

D-3) Dorn (Branchburg)

Ms. Katzer gave an update about the Dorn property. The resolutions for appraisal contracts were before the Freeholders for their review and approval. Once the resolutions pass, staff will begin the work to get contracts executed and set up the pre-appraisal meeting requested by the owner.

D-4) Doyle (Hillsborough)

This item was discussed in Closed Session.

D-6) Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Laura DePrado and was seconded by Sandra Rhue.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sandra Rhue
Secretary/Treasurer