

Minutes of the June 22, 2020
Somerset County Agriculture Development Board
Virtual Meeting

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the June 22, 2020 Somerset County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) Meeting began at 8:00 AM. This meeting was held virtually due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Members in Attendance

Mark W. Kirby, Chairman
W. Peter Staats, Vice Chairman
Richard Norz
Sandra Rhue
Ben Auletta (Late)

Members Absent

Ed Seidel, Secretary/Treasurer
Laura DePrado

Melonie Marano, Freeholder Liaison

Somerset County Staff

Walter Lane, Dir., SC Planning Div.
Anthony McCracken, Assis. Dir., SC Planning Div.
Kate Katzer, Principle Planner, SC Planning Div.
Catherine Bunting, Admin. Assis., SC Planning Div.
Thomas Boccino, SC Park Commission
Gary Pasquale, SC Deputy County Counsel
Kevin Boris, SC County Counsel Office

Public

Beth Davisson, NJ Conservation Foundation
Amy Mandelbaum, State Agriculture
Development Committee (SADC)

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the June 1, 2020 CADB meeting minutes was made by Peter Staats and was seconded by Sandra Rhue. Richard Norz abstained from the vote. The motion was passed and carried.

Public Comment

Beth Davisson from NJCF attended the meeting seeking permission to place the exception area on a property into preservation. She explained that this would be financed through a donor and that Somerset County would have no financial obligations but would need the CADB's permission to move forward. The Board discussed and reviewed the maps.

During discussions Freeholder Marano clarified that there was no relation between her and the property owners also named Marano.

The Board agreed to discuss the issue further in closed session.

I-1) Somerset County Preservation Plan – Update

Kate Katzer explained that staff has received an outline for review and that the consultant is also working on adjusting the calendar due to the changes that Covid-19 has brought. She explained that once the Steering Committee meets virtually to review the outline the CADB will have the opportunity to review the Ag portion and the entire plan.

D-2) Closed Session

A motion to enter closed session was made by Sandra Rhue and was seconded by Peter Staats. The motion was passed and carried and the Board entered closed session.

A motion to exit closed session was made by Peter Staats and was seconded by Sandra Rhue. The motion was passed and carried and the regular portion of the CADB meeting resumed.

D-3) Results and Actions from Closed Session

Morano: Richard Norz expressed needing more information regarding the Marano proposal before the Board could make any decision. The Board agreed.

Madden: Peter Staats made a motion to approve Ms. Katzer's drafted letter to Mr. Madden stating that there were no violations on the property at their most recent site inspection. The motion was seconded by Richard Norz and the motion was passed and carried.

Mueller: Richard Norz made a motion authorizing legal counsel to commence with litigation on the Mueller property subject to Freeholder approval. Ben Auletta, who had just joined the virtual meeting abstained from the vote. The motion was passed and carried.

I-2) SADC Meeting-Update

Amy Mandelbaum left the meeting before giving an update on the SADC. Mr. Katzer explained that she was emailed an update and would forward it to the Board after the meeting.

I-3) County/State Boards of Agriculture-Update

There was no update.

I-4) PSE&G Project: Roseland-Pleasant Valley Overhead Transmission Project

Ms. Katzer explained that staff met with Steven Bruder from the SADC regarding concerns that precautions are not being taken for minimal compaction of soil made by the PSE&G Roseland-Pleasant Valley Overhead Transmission Project. She explained that she will be requesting more information and will get back to the Board when it is received.

I-5) Johnson (Montgomery) – Monopole Project

Ms. Katzer explained that the SADC has not expressed any issues with a monopole being placed on the preserved Johnson farm in Montgomery. She explained that they are waiting on more information that was not provided in the application.

I-6) Ag Roundtable Results

Ms. Katzer informed the Board that the document that was created from the roundtable discussions is not live on the County website and Agriculture page. She explained it is now a living document and will be updated regularly.

I-7) Staff Comments

There were no additional comments.

D-1) Potential Projects

Drenchko: The Board was informed that the Drenchko application was finalized and sent to the SADC for green light approval which would hopefully be received by the end of July.

Gund: The Board was informed that closing documents for the Gund property are still being finalized and the property will hopefully be closing by the end of June.

Doyle: The Board was informed that the application is now at the SADC's office and that the surveys are currently being reviewed.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Edward Seidel
Secretary/Treasurer