

**Minutes of the January 25, 2021**  
**Somerset County Agriculture Development Board**  
**Virtual Meeting**

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the January 25, 2021 Somerset County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) Meeting began at 8:00 AM. This meeting was held virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This meeting is noted as the Reorganization Meeting.

**Members in Attendance:**

Mark Kirby, Chairman  
W. Peter Staats, Vice Chairman  
Sandra Rhue, Secretary/Treasurer  
Richard Norz  
Laura DePrado  
Christopher Carnevale  
Ben Auletta  
Matt D'Alessandro, Ex-Officio  
Paul Drake, Commissioner Liaison

**Somerset County Staff:**

Walter Lane, Dir., Planning Div.  
Anthony McCracken, Asst. Dir., Planning Div.  
Kate Katzer, Principal Planner, Planning Div.  
Thomas Boccino, Engineering  
Kevin Boris, County Counsel  
Greg Pasquale, Deputy County Counsel  
Patrice Brown, Administrative Assistant

**Public:**

Amy Mandelbaum, SADC

**Swearing in:**

Laura DePrado was sworn in as a member of the SCADB with a term ending on December 31, 2024.  
Peter Staats was sworn in as a member of the SCADB with a term ending on December 31, 2024.

**Re-Organization of the Executive Board**

Kate Katzer opened the floor for Nominations for the position of Chairman of the SCADB. Rich Norz nominated Mark Kirby and Laura DePrado seconded the nomination.

Ms. Katzer called for a motion to close this nomination and Sandra Rhue moved to close, Rich Norz seconded and a roll call was done. Mrs. Katzer then turned the nominations over to Mark Kirby to finish nominations for Vice Chair and Secretary. Chairman Kirby extended his thanks for Chair Nomination to the board. Chairman Kirby then opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Rich Norz nominated Peter Staats and Laura DePrado seconded and with no other nominations for Vice Chair, Laura Deprado voted to close and Sandra Rhue seconded. Vice Chair nominations were closed. Voice Vote rendered all in favor. Roll call was done for voting for Vice Chair and all were "Yes". Motion has been approved by unanimous vote. Chairman Kirby then opened the floor for Nominations for the position of Secretary of the Board. Rich Norz nominated Sandra Rhue and Laura DePrado seconded it. There was a call for a motion to close nominations. Laura DePrado

motioned to close and Rich seconded. Voice vote rendered all in favor. Roll call was done and all in attendance said yes. Sandra Rhue was approved and elected as Secretary of the Board.

**Introduction to New Members:** Commissioner Paul Drake who will be liaison to the SCADB introduced himself and the Board introduced themselves to him. A hearty welcome was extended by all members of the board.

Introduction to new ex-officio member Matt D'Alessandro, District Manager for Somerset Union Soil Conservation District.

**Approval of Minutes:**

A motion to approve the December 28, 2020 CADB meeting minutes was made by Richard Norz and was seconded by Chris Carnevale. Roll call was done and the motion was passed and carried.

**Public Comment & Presentations:**

There were no public comments.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

**I-1) Somerset County Preservation Plan Update:**

Ms. Katzer reported that the Planning Board is in the process of sending out the information for the Steering Committee meeting to be held on February 11<sup>th</sup> from 11:00a.m. until Noon. Ag Plan to be discussed. Once any changes are made, it will be shared with the public as well as our board for review. Supplement pieces for each portion will be included. Mrs. Katzer expressed a hope that when the Board sees the plan it will be well received considering the extensive amount of work put into it. Director of Planning Walter Lane stated that although lengthy, this Plan is a comprehensive document and he is confident it will be well received. He reported that the process of coordinating the three plans together was a tremendous undertaking but foresees that it will be "worth the wait". Lane also added that this is the 1<sup>st</sup> of its kind in the State with all three plans combined: Farmland Preservation, Open Space Plan and a Historic Preservation element. Once this plan is adopted, Director Lane looks forward to promoting and presenting this collaboration effort for various awards citing its unique quality and innovation. He considers this a great example of the Collaboration Culture we aspire to achieve.

**I-2 SADC Meeting-Update**

Rich Norz reported that at the next meeting (to be held on Thursday, 1/28/21) Soil Protection Standards will be discussed in continuation. He explained that the subcommittee has been working on this for a few years and is ready to roll out a proposal to be sent out in the Spring. Mr. Norz expressed his concern for being denied permission to be included with the subcommittee. He felt that his 7 year experience with Soil Protection would afford valuable input and or contribution to the subcommittee. Mr. Norz suggested that any additional board members' attendance at this meeting would likely be helpful.

Amy Mandelbaum, Regional Acquisition Coordinator for the SADC, invited all to attend the virtual meetings. She reported that the SADC has been working with Somerset County Staff on advancing several projects

and is hopeful for some closings in the near future. There is a new Right to Farm Law Amendment that was passed for Equine Related Farm Employees. This amendment will allow the employees to have housing in the same facility as the horses. Ms. Mandelbaum stated that this Bill is especially significant because for the 1<sup>st</sup> time, the Housing of Agricultural Laborers will be eligible for Right to Farm protection. The Bill directs the SADC to adopt regulations.

Ms. Mandelbaum updated the Board on the Fiscal 2021 Funding: It was passed by Governor Murphy and the funding is now available. She will proceed with Preservation Acquisition Grants as well as Stewardship. She thanked the Board for getting the word out to constituents.

### **I-3 County /State Boards of Agriculture - Update**

Rich Norz reported that his farm will host an “Ag in Action” this year. More details to come.

### **I-4 Staff Comments**

Ms. Katzer read a note of thanks from Commissioner Marano. She also reported on Drenchko application by Hillsborough. Amy Mandelbaum attended Hillsborough meeting and pushed the processing forward since time is of the essence.

## **DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:**

### **D-1) 2021 Meeting Dates**

Ms. Katzer gave the Board reference to page 7 which has the voted on and updated dates for the year as well as the agenda deadlines. The usual monthly reminders will be sent with the packet including log in information.

As requested by the Board, the public notice was posted deeming all meetings virtual due to the pandemic with a caveat defining a notice to eradicate should COVID-19 conditions improve enough for public gathering.

### **D-2 2021 Committee Assignments**

Ms. Katzer reported that Mark Kirby and Pete Staats went over the list and made a few changes. Rich Norz said that he will be unable to attend the February meeting. Chairman Kirby called for a motion to approve the Meeting Dates and the Committee Assignments: Sandra Rhue so Approved and Laura DePrado seconded a roll call was taken and all approved and the motion was passed and carried.

### **D-3) Beekman Nurseries (Hillsborough)**

Ms. Katzer shared with the Board that we have received a correspondence from Mr. Jones, owner of Beekman Nursery. He had come before the board requesting permission to add a house to the property. The Right to Farm Committee reviewed and denied the request deeming it not feasible. More will be discussed in Closed Session.

#### **D-4) Doyle (Hillsborough)**

Mrs. Katzer stated that a closing is soon to be expected. There will be further discussion in Closed Session.

#### **D-5) Dorn (Branchburg)**

Ms. Katzer reported that she, along with other Planning Division staff members Walter Lane, Tony McCracken and County Counsel Kevin Boris met with the Dorn family and discussed the pre-appraisal meeting that the family had requested. The meeting went well and all questions and concerns were addressed so that the family was more comfortable with the proceedings. Bruce Carlin and Merrill Taub will be appraisers on the project. An onsite visit will be set up for the appraisers to go out and obtain photos and whatever information needed for appraisal in mid-February.

#### **D-6 Mueller Settlement Documents (Hillsborough)**

Ms. Katzer stated that correspondence was received from Mr. Mueller's attorney. More will be discussed in closed session.

#### **D-7 Norz Hill (Hillsborough)**

Ms. Katzer reported that at last meeting, the Board decided to pass along the application to the Right to Farm committee for an SSAMP. Rich Norz recused himself but made comment as a member of the public requested language change to clarify the application. Ms. Katzer made the changes. Further discussion in closed session.

#### **D-8 Deerfield Farm (Bedminster)**

Kate Katzer shared that she received additional information from Sandy Urgo, additional comments to be made in closed session.

#### **D-9) Motion to enter Closed Session:**

A motion to enter Closed Session was made by Laura DePrado and was seconded by Chris Carnevale seconded. The motion was passed, a roll call was done and the Board entered Closed Session at 8:50a.m.

\*Please note, Richard Norz recused himself from discussion on Norz Hill Farm in closed session.

***Peter Staats joined the meeting at 9:02 a.m.***

#### **D-10) Results and Actions from Closed Session**

**Norz Hill Farm:** A motion to have corrections made to the documentation and resolution material for Mr. Norz's requested SSAMP was made by Laura DePrado and was seconded by Sandra Rhue. Richard Norz recused himself from the vote and Peter Staats abstained from the vote. The motion was passed and carried.

**Deerfield Farm:** A motion was made by Laura DePrado to request additional information on the Deerfield Farm project and was seconded by Sandra Rhue. The motion was passed and carried.

**Mueller Settlement Documents:** A motion was made by Peter Staats for a 60 day extension for supplying documentation for remediation. Laura DePrado seconded and the motion was passed and carried.

**Beekman Nursery:** A motion was made by Laura DePrado to draft a denial letter including explanation and options for moving forward. The motion was seconded by Sandra Rhue. A roll call was done, and the motion was passed and carried.

**D-11) Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Richard Norz and was seconded by Laura DePrado.

Respectfully Submitted by,

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Sandra Rhue  
Secretary/Treasurer