

Minutes of the March 22, 2021
Somerset County Agriculture Development Board
Virtual Meeting

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the March 22, 2021 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
Matt D'Alessandro

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

Members Not in Attendance:

Christopher Carnevale

Public:

Amy Mandelbaum, SADC

- *Chairman Mark Kirby thanked the Board and Staff for the get well card for his recent Knee Surgery.*

Approval of Minutes:

A correction was made by Sandra Rhue citing that on the last page of the minutes, the next meeting time should be listed as 8 a.m. instead of 8 p.m. A motion to approve the March 22, 2021 CADB meeting minutes with noted correction was made by Rich Norz and was seconded by Peter Staats. Roll call was done and the motion was passed and carried.

Public Comment & Presentations:

1. Linda Peterson, Consultant for Mueller Property presented the multi space plan for the remediation of the Mueller property and requested that the board review phase 1A for adoption.
2. Linda Peterson, Consultant for Doyle Property presented a request for the Board's approval to place a Cattle Barn of the property known as Mill Lane.

Informational Items:

3. **Somerset County Preservation Plan Update:**

Kate Katzer reported that Steering Committee met a while back and discussed various portions of the Preservation plan and during that meeting, the Steering Committee concurred that the language used regarding Deer Management should more so be Wildlife Management since there are bigger issues facing the Farming Community than Deer alone. There was an internal meeting with the Park System where Rich Norz stepped in as a representative of the Board. Various language and terminology were discussed that could be put into the plan that would ensure full coverage as well as giving the County ability to expand the scope of opportunities to help the farming community. Ms. Katzer said that the Parks System appeared to be comfortable with the language. Commissioner Drake now seeks to meet with staff and come up with additional ways to help the farming community. A meeting will be set up with the board to ascertain which topics the Commissioner and staff have touched on are most pertinent to the Farming Community.

I-4) SADC Meeting-Update

There is a new SADC Representative who started on March 1, 2021. Her name is Rachel De Flumeri. She briefed the Board on her background and was welcomed by the Board. Amy Mandlebaum thanked the board for having her and turned over her role to Rachel. Rich Norz shared that the the Board meeting last month there was an approval to send out the Soil Protection Standards for review. Once reviewed the gathered information will then be put into the register as an official document for public comment. Rich Norz also notified the Board that he would be participating on the State and not County level in this capacity.

I-5) County /State Boards of Agriculture - Update

No reports given today.

I-6) Ag Day 2021

Ms. Katzer reminded the Board that the County celebrated Ag Day 2021 on Friday, March 19th. There was an unveiling of the Virtual Map and Story Map. The story map goes through a brief history of the Ag community in Somerset County. Ms. Katzer gave a special thank you to Peter Stats who shared the history of the Bel Mead Coop and Laura DePrado who contributed a 3 series video of Gardening for further interaction and interest in the environment. The County Public Relations Department will be sending the Story maps and links to Social Media to widen its exposure. Ms Katzer expressed a probability that the SADB would again partner with the Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission to implement Arts & Ag which would pair Artists with Farmers to capture the essence of the Farm. The derived pieces of Art would then be displayed at Galleries all around the County as a Traveling Art Show.

The approved activity booklet from last year was approved and printed for distribution in Libraries.

The Board thanked Kate Katzer for a job well done.

I-7) Staff Comments

Planning Director Walter Lane thanked Kate Katzer for her great work on Ag Day 2021.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:

D-1) Segal and Morel (Bedminster)

Kate Katzer reported that the RFPs have been received and that she will request that the Board give her permission to forward paperwork and contracts to the Commissioners for approval. The two lowest bids were Carlin and Sterling DiSanto. Ms. Katzer invited the board to revisit this topic in closed session.

D-2) Dorn (Branchburg)

Ms. Katzer shared that the appraisers are currently working on compiling their reports. The Carlin report has been received and once all are gathered, they will be sent to the SADC. Ms. Katzer invited the Board to revisit this topic in closed session.

D-3) Doyle (Hillsborough)

Chairman Kirby suggested that this topic be revisited in closed session since the presentation had taken place earlier in the meeting.

D-4) Mueller Settlement Documents (Hillsborough)

Chairman Kirby Suggested this topic be revisited in closed session.

D-5) Hunter Farms (Montgomery):

Kate Katzer stated that Lauren Wasilauski from Montgomery reached out to notify the Board that Hunter farms would be on the SADC meeting agenda for March since they have requested additional shows dates. Chuck Roohr had spoken to Lauren regarding the dates and the reason for consideration of said dates. Being there no questions from the Board for Lauren Wasilauski, Chairman Kirby suggested that this topic be revisited in closed session.

D-6) Deerfield Farms (Bedminster)

Kate Katzer said that Sandy Ergo from NJCF presented an updated map of the Exception area for the board's review. The board requested the driveway be included in the exception area and that the SADC would require the same. The NJCF made the necessary changes to gain Board approval. Ms. Katzer said that Ms. Ergo talked with the owner and the owner was compliant. Septic was in question by the board. Currently the Septic field is underneath the agricultural field but the exception area is large enough to house the replacement septic field for the future.

Ms. Katzer mentioned Ag Day materials from 2020 have been inspected and repurposed for distribution to libraries to be handed out at their small events. An online presentation will also be available on the website for teachers and at home parents to share with children. Ms. Katzer also shared the games, coloring books and maps that are being developed for distribution as entertainment and informational tools for children as well as adults.

D-7 Closed Session

A motion to go into closed session was made by Peter Staats and seconded by Sandra Rhue. The Board went into Closed Session at 9:24.

Deerfield Farm

Deerfield Farm's septic field (upon replacement) will be placed within the exception area.

The property is surrounded by preserved open space and farmland. This would be a cost share with a Non-Profit and upon closing; the county will retain the easement. There was a motion to move forward with the application by Laura DePrado and seconded by Sandra Rhue. All voted Yes and the motion was passed and carried.

Dorn

Kate gave an update on the appraisal reports that estimate the property's easement value estimated at \$12,300.00 per acre. The reports will be sent to the SADC for review and CMV.

Segal & Morel

Multiple RFPs were received. The lowest bids were DiSantos at 2800 and Carlin at 2500. Kate requested the Board's approval to draft the resolutions and contracts for the Commissioners. There was a motion to approve the appraisers (DiSantos and Carlin) by Pete Staats and seconded by Sandra Rhue.

Mueller

Linda Peterson, Consultant for Mueller, drafted a multi-phased plan for remediation for the Board's discussion. Upon review, the Board decided to approve Phase 1A and requested that Mueller come back in April or May with a status update and request for additional approvals. There was a motion to approve Phase 1A with contingencies by Sandra Rhue and Seconded by Laura DePrado. All voted Yes and the motion was passed and carried. Chairman Kirby asked Council to write a letter to Al Osterman regarding a filed easement that was placed on the property after preservation. Laura DePrada made a motion to send the letter and Sandra Rhue seconded.

Hunter Farms

Laura Wausilowski, Open Space Coordinator for Montgomery Township, shared that Hunter Farms was up for review of shows of the 2021 Season before the SADC Board. Chuck Roohr explained that the SADC staff felt that Hunter Farms had made strides toward coming into compliance. Staff felt that the property would be eligible for reinstatement of shows. Kate Katzer and Greg Pasquale explained concerns over outstanding Right to Farm complaints against the property and how reinstatement of the shows could adversely impact the already intense situation with the neighbors. Staff will be reaching out to the SADC requesting information on how to handle any possible concerns from neighbors. Rich Norz recused himself from participation on the SADC level so that he could participate on the County level. A motion was made to approve the call to the SADC Director Susan Payne was made by Sandra Rhue and seconded by Peter Staats. All voted Yes and the motion was passed and carried.

Doyle

Linda Peterson, Consultant for Doyle, presented to the Board conceptual plans for a cattle building and manure composting facility. The Board reviewed the plans and noted that there would be a need for new Farm lane to the facility. Staff recommended a resolution that captures the addition of the new facility and

the new Farm lane. A motion was made to approve building on preserved ground following the NRCS plan by Peter Staats and seconded by Laura DePrado. All voted Yes and the Motion was passed and carried.

D-8) Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Rich Norz all voted Yes and the motion was passed and carried.

NEXT MEETING TO BE HELD ON MAY 26, 2021 VIA ZOOM AT 8:00 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sandra Rhue
Secretary/Treasurer