

Minutes of the May 24, 2021
Somerset County Agriculture Development Board
Virtual Meeting

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the May 24, 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
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
Sarah Fitzpatrick, County Counsel
Greg Pasquale, Deputy County Counsel
Patrice Brown, Administrative Assistant
Commissioner Paul Drake

Public in Attendance:

Rachel DeFlumeri, SADC
Cindy Roberts, SADC

Members Not in Attendance:

Christopher Carnevale
Ben Auletta (*Resigned*)

** Ben Auletta resigned via resignation letter which was read to the Board.*

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the **April 26, 2021 CADB Meeting minutes** with noted corrections was made by Peter Staats and was seconded by Sandra Rhue. Roll call was done, Laura DePrado abstained and the motion was passed and carried.

Public Comment & Presentations:

1. Michael Mueller- Mueller Property was not present.

Informational Items:

I-2) Somerset County Preservation Plan Update:

Kate Katzer reported that there is a Steering Committee meeting set for Wednesday, May 26, 2021 at 10:00a.m. Proposed changes to the mapping and comments will be discussed. The staff is currently considering summer months for public meetings. Public safety and schedule concerns will be surveyed and discussed after which they will be presented to the Board.

I-3) SADC Meeting-Update

Richard Norz reported that the Fiscal Year 22 PIG Grant program will be discussed and possibly there will be discussion on Soil Protection Standards as well.

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

Norz Hill Farm will host the **County Ag in Action** event on June 20, 2021 and Rich Norz extended an invitation for elected officials to come out and participate. Rich Norz announced his resignation from the County Board of Ag after 20 plus years.

I-5) Staff Comments

Kate Katzer said that she met with the SADC to discuss the Drenchko Property. This topic will be revisited in closed session.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:

D-1) Mueller (Hillsborough)

This topic will be revisited in closed session.

D-2) Osterman (Hillsborough)

Ms. Katzer reported that there was an Osterman Property site visit. The tour included Sherriff Officer presence to accompany Staff members, Council and Soil conservation members and a brief conversation with Mr. Osterman. This topic will be revisited in closed session.

D-3) Palermo (Bedminster)

Kate Katzer spoke to Beth Davisson who submitted application information for approval. This topic will be revisited in closed session.

D-4) Triple S Farm (Montgomery)

Kate Katzer reported that she, Vice Chair Peter Staats, and County Counsel Greg Pasquale made a site visit and toured the Triple S Property. Observation determined that the property is indeed a commercial farm and is in good condition. After examination of notes and photos, Staff is recommending the Board approve Commercial Farm Certification. This topic will be further discussed in closed session.

D-5) Fern Hill at Rooster Rock Farm (Peapack Gladstone)

Kate Katzer recounted the site visit to the Fern Hill property she and Vice Chair Staats made. The owner has recently purchased additional parcels and would like to have the Farm Certification updated to include these parcels. After inspection, a determination that all is in correct order and Staff recommendation is that Fern Hill's Certification be updated.

D-6) Dealaman Farm (Warren)

Ms. Katzer said that Warren Township is seeking support and guidance on a possible Right to Farm issue dealing with mulching on the property.

D-7) Soil Protection Standards/Special Occasion Events

**Rich Norz has recused himself on a County level from any Soil Protection Standards conversations; but will participate in discussion of Special Occasion Events.*

Kate Katzer recalled the presentation given by Susan Payne and Jeff Everett on Soil protection Standards. The Board brought up concerns at that time. Some comment changes were made to the letter. Ms. Katzer is holding the letter until the end of the week for the board to make any additional changes if need be before sending to the SADC.

Kate Katzer proposed a uniform application across all counties for the Special Occasion Events. A motion was moved to send a letter to the House of Representatives and the assembly by Rich Norz and seconded by Laura DePrado.

*Rachel DeFlumeri who is the replacement for Amy Mandelbaum from SADC introduced herself and thanked the Board for being so welcoming.

D8) Closed Session

A motion to go into closed session was moved by Laura DePrado and Seconded by Peter Staats. A roll call was made and the motion was passed and carried. The Board went into closed session at **9:31**.

**Into Closed Session at 8:44 a.m. –Out of Closed Session at 10:13a.m.*

D-9) Results and Actions from Closed Session

Triple S Farms

A motion to certify Triple S Farms as a commercial farm was moved by Peter Staats and Seconded by Laura DePrado. A roll call was made and the motion was passed and carried.

Fern Hill at Red Rooster Rock Farm

A motion was made to add an amendment to accommodate the property's extra 20 acres that were acquired for their Commercial Farm Certificate. The motion was moved by Sandra Rhue and seconded by Peter Staats. A roll call was made and the motion was passed and carried.

Drenchko Properties

A motion to release the property to the SADC was made by Laura Deprado and seconded by Peter Staats. A roll call was made and the motion was passed and carried.

Palermo

Motion to take over the Palermo easement upon closing at no cost to the County was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Sandra Rhue. A roll call was done and the motion was passed and carried with one objection.

Osterman

A motion was made to send a letter to Mr. Osterman's Lawyer on property findings that could be deemed as violations. The motion was moved by Laura DePrado and seconded by Sandra Rhue. The Motion was passed and carried.

Soil Protection Standards

A motion was made to have the comment letter sent to the SADC with copies sent to Senate and House of Representatives. The motion was moved by Laura Deprado and seconded by Peter Staats. A roll call was done and the motion was passed and carried.

*Richard Norz recused himself from any and all discussion on this matter.

D-10) Adjournment

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

NEXT MEETING TO BE HELD ON JUNE 28, 2021 VIA ZOOM AT 8:00 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sandra Rhue
Secretary/Treasurer