

Minutes of the January 24, 2022
Somerset County Agriculture Development Board
Virtual Meeting

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the January 24, 2022 Somerset County Agriculture Development Board (SCADB) Meeting began at 8:02 A.M. This meeting was held virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Open Public Meetings Statement

Chairman Mark Kirby reported the meeting had been duly advertised in accordance with Open Public Meetings Act as follows:

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 *et seq.*, and the Emergency Remote Meeting Protocol for Local Public Bodies N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.1 through 1.7, adequate notice of this meeting has been provided. The date, time and virtual meeting information for this meeting was published in The Star~Ledger and the Courier News. The agenda and the virtual meeting information was also posted on the County Planning Board website.

Roll Call

Roll call was taken and there was a full quorum.

Members in Attendance:

Mark W. Kirby, Chairman
W. Peter Staats, Vice Chairman
Sandra D. Rhue, Secretary/Treasurer
Christopher Carnevale
Laura DePrado
Robert Schultz
Kenneth Osterman
Matt D'Alessandro, Soil Conservation District
County Commissioner Paul Drake, Liaison

Members Not in Attendance:

None

Somerset County Staff:

Walter C. Lane, Director, Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development
Kate Katzer, Principal Planner, Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development
Thomas Boccino, Supervising Planner – Preservation, Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development
Patrice Brown, Administrative Assistant, Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development
Greg Pasquale, Deputy County Counsel

Public Members Present:

Dave Clapp, SADC Staff
Amy Mandelbaum, SADC Staff
Clint Dealaman, Farmer, Warren Township
Steve Katz, Director, Somerset County Food Banks

Reorganization of the SCADB and Swearing in of Board Members:

Kenneth Osterman was sworn in by County Counsel, Greg Pasquale. Mark Kirby was sworn in by County Council, Greg Pasquale.

Mark Kirby was nominated for Chairman by Peter Staats and seconded by Laura DePrado. Mark accepted the nomination. Nominations were closed. A roll call vote was taken, Mark abstained, and the motion passed. Peter Staats was nominated for Vice Chairman by Sandra Rhue and seconded by Laura DePrado. Pete accepted the nomination. Nominations were closed. A roll call vote was taken, Pete abstained, and the motion passed. Sandra Rhue was nominated for Secretary by Peter Staats and seconded by Laura DePrado. Sandra accepted the nomination. Nominations were closed. A roll call vote was taken, Sandra abstained, and the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the November 22, 2021 SCADB Meeting minutes was made by Peter Staats and was seconded by Sandra Rhue. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT & PRESENTATIONS:

Somogyi Farm – Right to Farm (Franklin Township):

Theresa's Farm - Little Rocky Hill in Franklin. Vehicles on property that the township is looking for assistance in determining usage type from the site visit to be scheduled. Aniko Somogyi has filled out the Right to Farm Dispute paperwork against Franklin Township. The owner and Township are looking to the County for help with distinguishing what is covered under Right to Farm, and what is the Township Zoning Office's jurisdiction.

Dealaman Farm – Right to Farm (Warren Township):

Clint Dealaman has filled out the Right to Farm Dispute paperwork against Warren Township in response to a Stop Work Order received on December 22, 2021. The owner and Township are looking to the County for help with distinguishing what is covered under Right to Farm, and what is the Township Zoning Office's jurisdiction.

Somerset County Food Banks – Steve Katz, Director:

Steve Katz, Director of the Somerset County Food Banks, is interested in partnering with the SCADB to bring additional information to the public about the need to support farms and food banks. He is hoping to partner with the SCADB for Ag Day 2022; and to have the SCADB visit one of the local food banks for a tour/informational event to share more about what the banks do for the community.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Somerset County Preservation Plan

Supervising Preservation Planner, Tom Boccino reported that over 120 public comments for the Preservation Plan are being finalized by staff. Final comments are expected from the Steering Committee and will then be delivered to the Consultants as soon as possible. An adoption from the Planning Board is planned for early Spring 2022. Principal Planner Kate Katzer informed the Board that staff has been working with the SADC to update all maps. A final data swap has just been completed.

SADC Meeting-Update

David Clapp from the SADC reported that the next meeting for the SADC will be Thursday, January 27, 2022. Mr. Clapp said that the SADC, in the near future, will hold the Soil Protection Standards subcommittee meeting. The Governor has signed funding bills. Amy Mandelbaum from the SADC informed that Board that because of staffing changes, she is back to being the SCADB Regional Acquisition Coordinator for Somerset County. Ms. Mandelbaum also expounded on the appropriation letter sent from the SADC and signed by Governor Murphy's office to Commissioner Director Shanel Robinson. This letter informs Somerset County of a 2 million dollar grant as well as additional 4 million in competitive funds.

County /State Boards of Agriculture – Update

No comments.

Staff Comments

Director Walter Lane commended Principal Planner Kate Katzer on the work she has done with several events which garnered the Governors Environmental Excellence Award for Healthy and Sustainable Communities. The Somerset County Agriculture Development Board was recognized as the winner for the 2021 Governor's Environmental Excellence Award (GEEA) for implementing outstanding environmental programs and projects supporting healthy and sustainable communities. To earn the award, applicants were required to demonstrate that their program is innovative, will benefit the environment, meet the needs of a specified group, reach a broad audience, offer education and outreach, and that the program can be duplicated and implemented by

other organizations. Applications were evaluated by professionals from the Department of Environmental Protection.

Director Lane announced the latest organizational change in which Tom Boccino will oversee all the Preservation efforts of the Office of Planning, Policy and Economic Development. Principal planner Kate Katzer reported that she and Director Walter Lane have been attending the Bernards Farmland Advisory meetings. Various Farmstands and Farms have been added to the County Farm list of places for the public to get fresh produce and other products.

Principal Planner Kate Katzer discussed Ag Day 2022. She asked the board for ideas on discussion topics and events. The date will be March 18, 2022. Ken Osterman, Sandra Rhue and Laura DePrado shared ideas for events with Principal Planner Kate Katzer and she shared a few of her own.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:

Meeting Dates 2022

Principal Planner Kate Katzer outlined the meeting dates for the year (4th Monday of the month) and Staff suggested the Board would meet the 3rd Monday of the month of December because of the Holiday. Sandra Rhue made a motion to accept the meeting dates as suggested and Laura DePrado seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Resolutions – Richard Norz and Anthony McCracken

Chairman Mark Kirby read the Resolution for Board member Richard Norz. Sandra Rhue moved the motion to approve the Resolution and Ken Osterman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Principal Planner Kate Katzer read the Resolution for Assistant Director retiree Anthony McCracken. Peter Staats moved the motion to approve the Resolution and Laura DePrado seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Appraisal Process

Staff is recommending to the Board that the current appraisal process be updated to help streamline the preservation process. Principal Planner Kate Katzer explained the current process. It was suggested that the program move to an “open ended contract” option that could help improve the process. Director Walter Lane and Supervising Preservation Planner Tom Boccino further explained the proposed process. A motion to streamline the appraisal process was made by Peter Staats and seconded by Laura DePrado. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Deerfield Creek Farm

Principal Planner Kate Katzer reported that this property (a.k.a. Dorn) is currently going through the Engineering Survey process.

Deerfield Farm

Principal Planner Kate Katzer updated the board the status of the preservation of the farm.

CLOSED SESSION:

At 9:46 a.m., a motion to go into closed moved by Laura DePrado and seconded by Peter Staats. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed. At 10:33a.m., the Board came out of closed session.

RESULTS AND ACTIONS FROM CLOSED SESSION:

Somogyi Farm – A site inspection to be scheduled.

Dealaman Farm – A site inspection to be scheduled. SSAM

Somerset County Food Bank – The Board agreed to look into partnership opportunities and is interested in visiting a local food bank to find out more about the programs available.

At 10:35 motion to Adjourn was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Sandra Rhue. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed.

The next meeting will be held on February 28, 2022, via Zoom at 8:00a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sandra Rhue

Sandra Rhue
Secretary/Treasurer