

Minutes of the June 26, 2023
Somerset County Agriculture Development Board

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the June 26, 2023, Somerset County Agriculture Development Board (SCADB) Meeting began at 8:04 A.M. This meeting was held in person in the Commissioner's Meeting Room at the Somerset County Administration Building in Somerville, N.J.

Open Public Meetings Act Compliance 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.*, adequate notice of this meeting has been provided. The date and time information for this meeting were published in The Star Ledger and the Courier News. The agenda for this meeting was also posted on the Somerset County Agriculture Development Board's website.

Roll Call

Roll call was taken. There was a Quorum.

Members in Attendance:

Mark W. Kirby, Chair
W. Peter Staats, Vice Chair
Sandra D. Rhue, Secretary/Treasurer
Laura De Prado
Debbie Norz
Kenneth Osterman
Paul Drake, Commissioner Liaison
Matt D'Alessandro, Soil Conservation District

Members Not in Attendance:

Robert Shultz

Somerset County Staff:

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

Public Members Present:

Richard Dodds, NJ Conservation Foundation Staff

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: SCADB Regular Meeting – May 22, 2023

A motion to approve the SCADB minutes of the May 22, 2023, meeting was made by Kenneth Osterman and seconded by Debbie Norz. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT & PRESENTATIONS:

No public comment

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. SADC Meeting -Update

Planning, Policy and Economic Development Planner, Kate Katzer reported to the Board that the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) voted to move the Soil Standard rules through the adoption process. There will be a special SADC meeting on Wednesday, June 28, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. The agenda did not clearly state the purpose of the meeting.

2. County/State Boards of Agriculture – Update

Debbie Norz informed the Board that the replacement members for the State Board of Agriculture have finally been approved and there will be a reorganization in July for State Board of Agriculture. Ms. Norz's term on the Board is up.

Ms. Norz reported that the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) hosted a 40th Anniversary dinner and invited all past SADC members. The Secretary of Agriculture's retirement was also noted. Chuck Roohr and Susan Payne gave a presentation which touched on a great deal of information regarding preserved land over the last forty years.

Kenneth Osterman reported that the County Board of Agriculture hosted a very successful Ag in Action event and that approximately 400 people attended. He hopes this will urge the County Board of Agriculture to hold the event yearly.

3. Staff Comments

Principal Planner Kate Katzer introduced the new Preservation Planner, Josephine Taranto. The Board introduced themselves to Josephine and welcomed her.

Ms. Katzer proposed to the Board that future meetings begin at 8:15 a.m. instead of 8:00 a.m. since doors to the building do not open until 8:00 a.m. due to security measures.

Planning, Policy and Economic Development Supervising Planner, Tom Boccino shared another win for Somerset County's Preservation Plan: a NACO (National Association of Counties) Award.

Mr. Boccino reported that the New Jersey Planning Conference was held last week, and it was a three-day conference (two days virtual and one in person). Walt Lane and Tom Boccino participated in a panel highlighting the Preservation Plan and partnerships that were formed. The panel also included representatives from the Stoutsburg Surland African American Museum, Surland Conservancy and New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

Kate Katzer reminded the Board that the Influencing Ag is scheduled for September 14, 2023, at 9:00a.m. at Dukes Farm. Commissioners Drake and Commissioner Marano will be participating in the panels, along with Assemblyman Freiman and County Administrator Colleen Mahr.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

1. Special Occasion Events Draft Application Review

Kate Katzer reminded the Board that the Committee that was created for Special Occasion Events met last month and reviewed the draft application from the State Agriculture Development Committee. Edits were made including some additional mapping and resources. Application certification options were discussed during the meeting, the structure of the application, and its intended use was modified. The Board made a few edit suggestions to the application.

A motion was made by Laura DePrado to approve the application with the proposed edits, placed on the County's website and emailed to the farmers by the end of the week. The motion was seconded by Ken Osterman. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Debbie Norz made a motion that the Board has 10 business days to deem the application complete once it has been received by the County. Once the application has been deemed complete, the county has 90 days to determine if the proposed event meets the criteria to hold Special Occasion Events. Ken Osterman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Bedminster Stables- Bedminster Township

Kate Katzer updated the Board on the complaint that was received by the Somerset-Union Soil Conservation District and forwarded to staff. Staff visited the site and found that the work occurring on the property was part of the Board's January 2023 approval for Ag Labor Housing and septic installation. Staff determined that there is no violation onsite. Soil Conservation noted that an updated plan from the owner is required because the activity appears to be slightly larger than originally proposed. Copies of the updated plans will be sent to CADB staff to be kept on file.

3. Red Oak Farm – Bedminster Township

Kate Katzer shared that the property owners have placed a berm around a portion of the perimeter of the property. The project had been approved by the Soil Conservation District but was not approved by the Board. A site visit is being scheduled. Rich Dodds of NJCF and Soil Conservation District staff will accompany staff on the visit.

4. Mueller Properties- Hillsborough Township

Kate Katzer reported that Mr. Mueller has notified staff that he has completed the millings removal and soil movement in preparation for the construction of the barn pad and has requested a site visit. Staff has been given permission by the Board to release a letter for the barn pad approval after the site visit confirms that all required site work has been completed.

At 9:06 a.m., a motion was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Debbie Norz to go into Closed Session. A roll call was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

At 9:51 the meeting came out of Closed Session.

5. Results and Actions from Closed Session:

A motion was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Debbie Norz for a letter to be sent to Bedminster Stables stating that no violations were found during the site visit. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Debbie Norz for a resolution to be prepared for the July meeting approving the Special Occasion Events (SOE) application and process for approval by letter rather than a resolution. The process letter will state that staff has 10 business days to deem an application complete, and that staff has been empowered to make those determinations. The SOE Committee will review the application once deemed complete and make recommendations for the approval letter. The approval letter will be forwarded to the full Board for its review that the application meets all criteria. The full Board will vote on the application, during the next regular meeting. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was passed unanimously.

An amended motion was made by Debbie Norz and seconded by Laura DePrado for the Board to approve the County SOE application with the discussed changes to be uploaded to the website within a week including:

- The SOE deadline for the end of the year events survey by January 15th of the following year.
- An addition will be made to section 3 that events with more than 250 people at one time cannot have more than 6 events per year.
- Section 3, question 3 revised to clarify that exception areas will not be included toward the maximum acreage allowed to hold an event during the SOE application review..
- Section 6 revised to clarify that the checklist items require initials.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Ken Osterman to change the meeting start time to 8:15a.m. to allow Board members time to enter the building which opens at 8:00 a.m. Ken Osterman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was passed.

At 9:54 a.m. a motion was made by Debbie Norz and seconded by Laura DePrado to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting will be held in person on July 24, 2023, at 8:00 a.m. in the same location.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sandra Rhue

Secretary/Treasurer