

Minutes of the December 18, 2023
Somerset County Agriculture Development Board

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, December 18, 2023, Somerset County Agriculture Development Board (SCADB) Meeting began at 8:33 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 was 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
Laura De Prado
W. Peter Staats, Vice Chair
Sandra D. Rhue, Secretary/Treasurer
Debbie Norz
Kenneth Osterman
Matt D'Alessandro, Soil Conservation District

Members Not in Attendance:

Robert Schultz
Paul Drake, Commissioner Liaison

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, 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
Alyssa Puccio, Deputy County Counsel

Public Members Present:

Dave Zaback, State Agricultural Development Committee

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: SCADB Regular Meeting –November 27, 2023

A motion to approve the SCADB minutes of the November 27, 2023 meeting with corrections was made by Kenneth Osterman and seconded by Debbie Norz. A roll call vote was taken, Peter Staats abstained, and the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT & PRESENTATIONS:

No public comment

INFORMATION ITEMS1. SADC Meeting -Update

Dave Zaback, of the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC), reported that letters have been mailed to the landowners that explain Soil Protection Standard Rules. Mr. Zaback requested that if any farmers indicate that they have not received the letters, that they should be directed to contact the SADC and a copy of the letter will be forwarded to them as soon as possible. Staff is currently reviewing the comments received about the proposed rules.

The proposed formula-based appraisal Bill will likely be adopted in January, 2024. The update to the appraisal rules will still allow for the original appraisal option to be utilized, however the new formula should help to equalize per-acre values among the counties.

2. County/State Boards of Agriculture – Update

Debbie Norz shared that the State Board of Agriculture's Ag. in Action and the Everett Scholarship events will be held on September 7, 2024, at the Carnavale Farm in Hillsborough Township.

As a result of the State Board of Agriculture's 3rd round of interviews, two new 1-year term board members Anna Adma and Michael Powell have been appointed.

3. Staff Comments

Tom Boccino, Supervising Planner of the Office of Planning Policy & Economic Development reported that the authorizing resolutions for the Drenchko property in Hillsborough, and the Smith Farm in Bedminster are on the agenda for Tuesday's County Commissioner meeting. The baseline monitoring reports have been completed for both farms and the acquisitions have been authorized by the SADC at its December, 2023 meeting. The closing for the Smith Farm is being scheduled by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and is anticipated for late January or early February, 2024. Once closed, the County will hold the easement for the Smith Farm. The Drenchko property will likely close in February, 2024, and the easement will be held by the County.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS1. 2024 Meeting Dates

A motion to approve the 2024 meeting dates and times as presented was made by Debbie Norz and seconded by Laura DePrado. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. 2024 Committees

A motion to approve the 2024 committee list was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Peter Staats. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. 2024 Right to Farm Committee Meeting Dates

A motion to approve the 2024 Right to Farm Committee meeting dates was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Peter Staats. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. 2024 Legislative Committee Meeting Dates

A motion to approve the 2024 Legislative Committee meeting dates was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Peter Staats. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

5. 2024 Board Roster

Kate Katzer requested that the Board review the 2024 Board Roster and provide updates. Finalized copies will be provided to the Board at its January meeting.

6. Closed Session

At 8:53 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 9:07 a motion was made by Peter Staats and seconded by Debbie Norz for the meeting to come out of closed session. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

9. Results and Actions from Closed Session:

There were no actions that needed to be taken at this time.

At 9:10 a.m. a motion was made by Laura DePrado and seconded by Debbie Norz to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken, and the motion was passed unanimously.

The next meeting will be held in person on January 22, 2023, at 8:15 a.m. in the same location.

Respectfully Submitted by,



Secretary/Treasurer

Sandra D. Rhue