



Board of Chosen Freeholders

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
PO Box 2900
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900

MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: John E. Lanza, Freeholder

John.lanza@co.hunterdon.nj.us

Hunterdon Continues Farmland Preservation Strategy With 175 Farm Acres Saved In Raritan Township

The Hunterdon County Freeholders, at a recent Board meeting, approved adding another 175 acres to the county's farmland inventory by reserving funds, and partnering with the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC), towards preserving the Bowlby Farm, in Raritan Township.

Freeholder John E. Lanza, the Board's Planning and Land Use liaison, stated at the meeting, "The preservation plan calls for the County Open Space Fund to provide 20% of the cost of the purchase of the development easement, while 80% is provided by the SADC.

Identifying methods for alternative funding sources continues to help reserve the County's open space funds for other preservation projects."

The proposed cost of the purchase of the farm's development easement is \$1,252,680, with SADC providing \$1,002,144 and Hunterdon County's Open Space fund providing \$250,536.

There are currently 440 farms preserved in the County totaling more than 34,000 farmland acres, equal to 12% of the county and close to 30% of the assessed farmland.

Lanza added, "By funding projects like the Bowlby Farms, the County continues to partner with the SADC to preserve the viewshed and protect the tributaries to the Neshanic River, while advancing the County's farmland preservation strategy. Kudos to Mr. Bob Hornby, our farmland specialist, and the Planning Department staff, for finding a creative way to preserve a major property."

The SADC administers the Farmland Preservation Program, in coordination with the County Agriculture Development Boards and local Ag Advisory Committees, to preserve farmland as an important investment for future generations by purchasing development rights to preserve farmland in perpetuity.

Freeholder Lanza continued, "Farmland preservation continues to be a priority for the Freeholders. On behalf of the Board, I also extend our thanks to the volunteer members of the County Agriculture Development Board who put the time in to review and approve the preservation recommendations that come to us.

Preserving the agricultural nature of the county is a key component not only of our environmental planning, but also for Hunterdon County's economic development strategy."