

Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board Meeting
Rt 12 County Complex Building 1 Assembly Room
February 9, 2023 @ 8:00 pm

Members in Attendance:

Dave Bond- Chair
Bob Hoffman- Vice-Chair
Susan Blew
Bill Bowlby
Alex Hammerstone
Forest Locandro
John Perehinys
Marc Phillips

CADB Staff Present:

Katrina Campbell, Esq. County Counsel
Aaron Culton Esq., County Counsel
Katherine Fullerton, Supervising Planner
Bob Hornby, CADB Administrator
Kevin Milz, HCSCD
Megan Muehlbauer, NJAES

This meeting was held in person with respect to Public Health guidelines.

Open Public Meeting Act:

Chairman Bond opened the meeting at 8:00 p.m. and read the Open Public Meeting Act:

"This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act. Adequate notice has been provided by prominently posting and maintaining so posted throughout the year on the first floor of the County Administration Building, Main St., Flemington, New Jersey a public place reserved for such announcements, and by mailing on or before January 17, 2023, to The Hunterdon Democrat, Star Ledger, The Trenton Times, The Courier News and The Express Times newspapers, and TAP Into it newspaper and designated by the Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board to receive such notices, and by filing with the Hunterdon County Clerk a schedule of the times and dates of such meetings."

Pledge of Allegiance:

Roll Call: Absent– Christian Bench, Dave Kyle, Liz Schmid.

Approval of Minutes:

- **Minutes of the January 12th CADB Meeting** – Marc Phillips made a MOTION to approve, Bob Hoffman SECONDED. All in favor by voice vote.

Communications and Administrative Business:

- **CADB Staff Update – Statewide formula:** Bob Hornby followed up from last month about the letter from Assemblyman Alex Sauickie on the use of a statewide formula for farmland appraisals, the Bill passed in the State Assembly on January 26 with a 77-1 vote. It has been referred to the State Senate Economic Growth Committee. Traditional appraisals on properties would still be required but the landowner would also be offered a value based on a formula established to plug in standardized values for different Municipalities. The idea is that it takes the fluctuation out of the real estate market and gives a more predictable value to the easement. Bob contacted Assemblyman Sauickie's office for more information and has not gotten a reply. It's a popular program in the Pine Lands. Some discussion ensued. Chairman Bond asked for a MOTION to write a letter of support for a statewide formula as proposed in Bill A4729. Bill Bowlby made a MOTION, Bob Hoffman SECONDED. All in favor by Voice Vote.

- **The Special Occasion Events bill** was passed and signed by Governor Murphy and is effective immediately. Preserved farms that have over \$10,000 in annual income can hold up to 26 events a year. Bob previously sent an email to the Board covering the guidelines. Discussion ensued.
- **Farm Plan:** Public meeting is March 9th. Sent out notices to all municipalities that have target farms and non-profits.
- **Active Projects**
 - **Campbell/MDHD2** (Alexandria Twp.) – Landowner withdrew, no development potential.
 - **Amwell Valley Conservancy** (East and West Amwell Twps.) Appraisals are out, should come back in late February.
 - **Collins Farm** (East Amwell Twp.) – Have asked for an extension to consider the offer.
 - **Barnes Farm** (Kingwood Twp.) –SADC passed it on their January agenda. Bob is working on RFP for survey.
 - **Saums Farm** (Readington Twp.) County Commissioners passed the grant agreement at the end of January. Going through final legal review.
- **Monitoring Update:** Kevin Milz
 - Nothing new to report, monitored an additional 19 farms without issue.

State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) Updates:

Dave Clapp in attendance on behalf of SADC

- Dave stated Soil Protections Standards sub-committee met early in the month and will meet again later this month, there will be an update at the February SADC meeting. This year SADC celebrates its 40th anniversary and will have events though out the year.

Chair Comments:

- None at this Time

Old Business:

- None at this Time

New Business:

- County Counsel Katrina Campbell mentioned that the Commissioners, at their last Board meeting, asked about Senate Bill S3534, sponsored by Senator Doug Steinhardt and Senator Michael Testa, banning foreign ownership of farmland. They would like the Boards input. Discussion ensued, Bill Bowlby made a MOTION to write a letter of support for the Bill to the Commissioners, John Pehinys SECONDED. All in favor by Voice Vote.

Right To Farm Matters:

- **Commercial Farm Certification: Meadowbrook Winery, 18 King St. Tewksbury Twp. Block 38 Lots 11, 14, 14.02 & 14.03** - County Counsel Katrina Campbell explained that they are only here tonight for Commercial Farm Certification. This is not a hearing on this application, that will be done later. Conor Quilty is representing the vineyard and

landowner Frank Schwab. Mr. Quilty is the General Manager of Meadowbrook Winery. County Counsel Aaron Culton swore in Mr. Quilty. Mr. Quilty gave a general overview of the operation. Mr. Culton asked how many lots they are covering? 4 lots. You are currently farmland assessed? Yes. Are these lots located in an area where farmland is a permitted use? Yes. To the best of your knowledge, is the operation in compliance with the federal and state regulations and statues? Yes. Based on the submission, the farm satisfies the criteria for a Commercial Farm. Bob Hornby, referring to a map, stated that lot 14, 14.02 & 14.03 are farmland preserved, the easement is held by the SADC, they have confirmed there are no current easement violations. Some discussion ensued. Chairman Bond asked for a MOTION to declare this a Commercial Farm. Bill Bowlby made a MOTION, Forest Locandro SECONDED. Chairman Bond asked for a roll call vote.

ROLL CALL MOVED SECONDED AYES NAYS ABSTAIN ABSENT

David Bond, Chair			<i>X</i>			
Robert Hoffman, Jr., Vice Chair					<i>X</i>	
Susan Blew			<i>X</i>			
Marc Phillips			<i>X</i>			
John Pehinys			<i>X</i>			
Bill Bowlby			<i>X</i>			
Christian Bench						<i>X</i>
Alex Hammerstone			<i>X</i>			
Dave Kyle						<i>X</i>
Liz Schmid						<i>X</i>
Forest Locandro			<i>X</i>			

7 IN FAVOR, 3 ABSENT, 1 ABSTENSION, MOTION CARRIED

Public Comment:

- Karin Elkind, Tewksbury Twp. asked for an explanation of the preservation easements on lot 14.

Adjournment:

- MOTION to Adjourn made by Marc Phillips, John Pehinys SECONDED. All in favor at 8:35pm

Respectfully submitted:

Bob Hornby, CADB Administrator

Prepared with the assistance of Colleen Runge, Planning Department Clerk