

Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board Meeting

February 11, 2021 @ 8:00 pm

314 Route 12 County Complex
Building #1 | Assembly Room
Flemington, New Jersey

Members in Attendance via Phone:

Dave Bond-Chair
Bob Hoffman-Vice Chair
Christian Bench
Susan Blew
David Kyle
Gerry Lyness
John Perehinys
Marc Phillips
Liz Schmid

CADB Staff Present via Phone:

Shana Taylor, Esq. County Counsel
Aaron Culton, Esq., Asst County Counsel
Bob Hornby, CADB Administrator
Megan Muehlbauer
Kevin Milz

In consideration of COVID-19 public health guidelines, this meeting was held telephonically and via Zoom and hosted by County Counsel Paralegal Samantha Gravel. CADB members and the public called in to a prearranged number or Zoom login advertised on the agenda distributed and posted electronically.

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 15, 2021, 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 – Ted Harwick and Forest Locandro

Approval of Minutes:

- **Minutes of the January 12th CADB Meeting** Liz Schmid made a MOTION to approve, Robert Hoffman SECONDED. Susan Blew & Gerry Lyness ABSTAINED. All in favor by Voice Vote.

Communications and Administrative Business:

- **CADB Staff Update** – 32 Active applications
 - **Kappus Farm** (Alexandria Twp.) – Final review, probably next to close
 - **Thomas Farm** (East Amwell Twp.) – Survey in process by Bohren & Bohren
 - **Furlong Farm** (Alexandria & Franklin) – Went to Alexandria Twp. Committee meeting, they are for it. Working with Hunterdon Land Trust on an RCPP Grant that would cover both the local and The County portion. Franklin has asked Bob to come to their meeting on February 25th to walk them through the process.

- **Magnolia Creek Farm** (Franklin Twp.) – Got CMV back from SADC and presented to the landowner, going to try to get it funded through federal funds.
 - **Grochowicz Farm** (Hampton, Glen Gardner, Bethlehem) – Gotten through all local approvals and is on the SADC Agenda for March 25th. Survey work is already done, hoping to close once the SADC finals get through.
 - **Silva Farm** (Holland Twp.) – Minor survey revisions, should close soon.
 - **DeSapio Farm** (Kingwood Twp.) – Survey under review
 - **Saums Farm** (Readington Twp.) – On agenda tonight for final approval. Came in as a MPIG. One large farm that Readington Twp. bought, divided to preserve half under Green Acres and half under Farmland Preservation, plan to auction Farmland portion after preservation. Due to SADC procedures Readington Twp. has requested a switch to CPIG. Doesn't change application or cost share, it just makes it easier to resell.
 - **Hoyer Farm** (West Amwell Twp.) - Has been about quiet for about a year, the owner got back in touch with Bob a couple weeks ago. They are still interested in preservation.
- **Staff Activity**
 - Bob stated work on PSE&G easement has begun, replacing towers with Monopoles. Was called out to Rogers Farm, 74 Everett Rd. they were originally supposed to put in gravel roads to get into the towers, they did an in the field change to use matting instead of the gravel road which isn't a bad thing, but they did soil prep for the gravel roads, going back and forth with SADC because that was not what was agreed to. There was already winter wheat planted, so going forward they are going to ask that they not do any soil disturbance to keep that root structure intact.
 - East Amwell had a Farms Project meeting, CADB will soon be starting a required review of the Farmland Preservation Plan.
- **Communications**
 - Letter from Readington Township RE: Saums Farm, requesting change from a MPIG to a CPIG.
 - Annual grant funding letter from SADC, Hunterdon County got an additional \$1 million base grant to fund preservation.
- **Monitoring Update-** Kevin Milz had additional comments about the JCP&L Tower replacement project. He stated that he noticed they are laying out almost a railroad tie material to get the machinery across the landscape which is good because it alleviates soil compaction and disturbance. Since last meeting about 25 farms have been visited. The recent snowstorms have slowed things down some. He has been in touch with some landowners and discussed some potential new standards that might affect them: SOE, soil disturbance in heavy use area.

SADC Updates:

Bob spoke on behalf of the SADC. He attended the January 28 meeting electronically.

- Bill S1245 passed the house it allows Equine Housing as a Right to Farm, it's only Equine Housing in the barn. SADC goes through the rule making process after approval, details are still in the making.
- Best Management Practices for soil disturbance on preserved farms discussion continues. Draft documents for all the Best Management Practices have been discussed over the last year, SADC Staff is creating a redline version of that. Hopefully by the next meeting they will have come up with a single document that can go out for public comment. The basic

concept is up to 6 acres or 8% of the property can be developed for agriculture, some members think that 6 acres is too much for smaller farms. Any comments from the Board, should be forwarded to the SADC. Bob fielded questions from the Board.

Chair Comments: Wants to thank everyone for dialing in and Shana for setting them up with the Zoom meeting.

Old Business:

- **Resolution 2021-02; Saums Farm**, Readington Twp. Block 74 Lot 4 Final Cost Share Approval. Bob stated that the farm is in Readington Twp. on Rockefeller Rd. it is ~55 acres with a 4-acre exception area. 76% tillable, currently owned by the township. The SADC will contribute \$349,830, the County will contribute 116,610, it says that Readington will also contribute 116,610, but will be deducted at closing. Readington will auction it after closing. John Perehinys made a MOTION to approve, Liz Schmid SECONDED. All in favor by voice vote.

New Business:

NONE AT THIS TIME

Right To Farm Matters:

- **SSAMP Hearing- Beneduce Vineyards (Alexandria Block 21 Lot 41.31) No testimony will be heard. A Special Meeting will be held on a date to be announced.**
 - Counsel called for a motion to open Public Hearing on Beneduce Vineyard, Liz Schmid made a MOTION to Open, Susan Blew SECONDED. All in favor by Roll Call Vote
 - Counsel called for a motion to close and carry the Public Hearing until the next CADB meeting on March 11, 2021. Liz Schmid made a MOTION to close and carry until next CADB Meeting, Susan Blew SECONDED. All in Favor by voice vote.

Public Comment: Member of the Public Mara Istlin expressed concern about building on preserved land.

Adjournment: MOTION for adjournment made by John Perehinys, Liz Schmid SECONDED. All in favor, Meeting Adjourned