

MIDDLESEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

75 BAYARD STREET – 5TH FLOOR

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. 08901

TEL: (732) 745-4014

FAX: (732) 745-8443

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Supervising Planner

LAURIE SOBEL, PP, AICP
Senior Environmental Planner



MINUTES

MIDDLESEX COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Meeting of October 14, 2015

8:00 p.m.

Held at the Cranbury Township Municipal Building

ATTENDANCE:

Voting Members:

Alan Danser
Jim Giamarese
John Riggs
Robert Von Thun
Thomas Mancuso
Rodger Jany

Staff:

George Ververides
Mirah Becker
Laurie Sobel
Barbara Koonz, Esq.

Others:

Dan Knox, SADC

I. Notification of Adequate Public Meeting Notice

Mr. Danser called the meeting of the Middlesex County Agriculture Development Board to order at 8:00 p.m. Ms. Sobel stated that the meeting had been properly noticed according to the Open Public Meetings Act and all notifications had been provided to all local media outlets.

II. Roll Call

Ms. Sobel called the roll as follows:

Mr. Danser	present
Mr. Riggs	present
Mr. Giamarese	present
Mr. Von Thun	present
Mr. Moskowitz	not present
Mr. Mancuso	present
Mr. Jany	present

III. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting and Closed Session of July 22, 2015

The minutes of the Regular Meeting and Closed Session of July 22, 2015 were distributed to the members in advance of today's meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Riggs, seconded by Mr. Giamarese and approved to adopt the minutes of the Regular Meeting and Closed Session as presented.

IV. Correspondence

A. Township of Monroe – Cease and Desist Orders

Ms. Koonz' office is currently working with County Counsel in getting the letters out that were discussed during the last meeting regarding Monroe Township's cease and desist of mulching activities on preserved farmland, which impacted two properties preserved through our program. Ms. Koonz' office has been working on writing a letter for the Court's record of what is and isn't allowed on preserved farmland.

B. Article – "Farmer Agritourism Resources: Hayride Safety Educational Tools"

Ms. Sobel distributed a copy of a recent article from the Rutgers University/Sustaining Farming on the Urban Fringe Publication. This month's article was about Agritourism & Hayride Safety on Farms. There were also related links available on the on-line version of the article.

V. Old Business

A. Update on the Individual Farm Easement Purchase Applications

Ms. Sobel presented a report on the current status of easement purchase application as listed below:

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Status</u>
Jesse Voight	Closing documentation and payment vouchers are currently being finalized. CADB attorney's office is working on obtaining signatures on the Deed of Easement. The closing date will be scheduled after all closing documents are finalized and all signed need pages have been returned.
J.B. Heatherwood Farms	SADC certified value will be reviewed at a closed session later in the meeting.

Ms. Sobel stated that she had anticipated having a new application for the Board's review and preliminary approval at this meeting for a farm in Monroe. However, the landowners needed more time to finalize their application and exception areas. She might also have a Voluntary ADA Petition before the Board in the next month or so for a potential new application in East Brunswick.

V. Old Business (continued)

B. lafelice Farm, Cranbury Township

Ms. Sobel gave an update on the lafelice Farm in Cranbury. At the last meeting, following the Board's discussion with Dan Knox from the SADC, the Board (CADB) decided to hold off on granting preliminary approval to the application until further staff analysis was done sincere as there were some concerns with how the GIS mapping was done on the tillable map. After further analysis and conversations with the SADC, it appears that the property is not eligible for the FPP at this time, as it does not satisfy the minimum eligibility criteria for tillable area.

According to program criteria, for parcels greater than 10 acres, at least 50% of the total land area or a minimum of 25 acres, whichever is less, must be tillable. The members received two maps prepared by the SADC which showed, that the lafelice Farm appears to only be 44% or 13.6 acres tillable (& the true calculation may actually be a little less than this as there is some area around the riding track and also a small area to the south of the walker that were counted as tillable in the map that might not actually be tillable). It would be difficult to increase the tillable acreage in this application due to the remainder of the parcel containing large amounts of wetlands and wetlands cannot be converted to farm production.

There is also a secondary concern with this application related to the development potential of the parcel. FPP requires that eligible farms contain potential for future development; however mapping indicates, a significant portion of the property is subject to wetlands, and given the current 627 ft. of road frontage on Dey Road & the large amount of wetlands present on the property, there are concerns regarding the ability to accommodate the development of additional housing opportunities.

A formal letter was sent to the applicants and their attorney explaining the reasons for denial. A copy of the letter was distributed to the members.

VI. New Business

A. Planning Incentive Grant (P.I.G.) Application -- FY 2017

Ms. Sobel stated that staff will be working on updating the annual P.I.G. Application for Fiscal Year 2017 over the next month or so for submission to the SADC in December. This is the time when updates are made to the Project Areas, ADAs, and Targeted Farms to reflect changes that have taken place over the past year, as well as solicit new properties to add to the County's Targeted Farm list and to evaluate existing funding at the county and municipal levels. Our staff recently sent letters and PIG update information to the six municipalities located within the ADA, asking for input on any new targeted farms they may wish to add or remove from their respective lists for the upcoming fiscal year.

Staff will be working on updating the five different Project Area Applications as well as the County-Wide Application & all related GIS mapping over the next several weeks; and will provide a summary of the project area totals & mapping for the Board's review once the application is completed.

VI. New Business (continued)

B. Proposed Soil Disturbance Regulations

The board briefly discussed the topic of soil disturbance on preserved farmland following the SADC's offer to come out to the various CADBs for a discussion with board members. It was decided that the Middlesex CADB will ask the SADC to come out to a future meeting if the proposed soil disturbance regulations become further along.

VII. Public Comment

There was no Public Comment made at this evening's meeting.

VIII. Closed Session

A motion was made by Mr. Jany, seconded by Mr. Mancuso and approved to convene a Closed Session to discuss an acquisition matter.

A motion was made by Mr. Jany, seconded by Mr. Mancuso and approved to adjourn the Closed Session at 8:50 p.m..

IX. Reconvene the Regular Meeting

A motion as made by Mr. Riggs, seconded by Mr. Mancuso and approved to reconvene the regular meeting.

X. Action as a Result of Closed Session

A draft resolution which authorized presentation of an offer to the landowner of the J. B. Heatherwood) Melissa Beck) Farm was presented to the Board for their consideration. A motion was made by Mr. Giamarese, seconded by Mr. Jany and approved to send an offer based on the SADC's certified value to the landowner of the J.B. Heatherwood (Melissa Beck) Farm. The landowner will have 60 days to respond to the offer.

XI. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be announced.

XII. Adjournment

A motion was made, seconded and approved to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

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