

Township of Franklin Agricultural Advisory Committee
Meeting of March 9, 2020
Minutes

In attendance (6) Chay Johnston, Ralph Travaglione,
Mike Vassallo, Jim Ketchum, Ken Atkinson, Cindy Roberts,

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chay at 7:15 PM after the Flag Salute. OPMAC guidelines were adhered to.

The minutes of the last meeting (January 13, 2020) were approved.

FARM PRESERVATION STATUS

Ken Atkinson reported:

Farms That Are Talking To Our Facilitator To Start Preservation:

DiGioia Farm. Dominick & Tammy. Block 6402, lot 11. Dutch Mill Rd. 15 acres in the Main/Piney Hollow PIG. Pinelands PRR. They received an application on October 9, 2019. There has been no contact since last meeting.

Hunsinger Farm. Block 5901 lot 88, 23 acres. They received an application in June of 2018. Ken called and left a voice mail if they were still interested. Jeff Thies rents their land, and he will also contact them to see if they still are interested. There has been no contact since last meeting.

Penn Farm. Block 1306 lots 17 & 18, 30 acres. Delsea Dr. Zoned both Highway Commercial and RA, in the Central Project PIG. They received an application on February 10, 2020. They are aware that they cannot preserve their front portion of both lots because of zoning. Because of their commercial exposure adjacent to Delsea Dr. on both lots, the land owners are not concerned.

Jean Bellone Farm. Block 6805 lot 4.1 is in a trust. 32 acres. Jean has signed with intent to preserve and is now deceased.

Andy Bellone. Block 6805 lot 6 is about 18 acres Andy has signed with intent to preserve.

Tom Bellone . is about 13 acres. Tom has signed with intent to preserve.

Phil Danko Farm Block 6805 lot 3. 31 acres. Phil has signed with intent to preserve.

All four farms are on Harding Highway in the Downstown area and the front 300 feet of these farms are zoned Highway-Commercial. Their applications are on hold. Steve Bruder of SADC has stated that our zoning ordinance does not include Ag as a permitted use within this zone. Furthermore, the Right-to-Farm act would not apply here to protect these farmers should a concern arise. Therefore, all four farms are ineligible to be preserved. The SADC will give a conditional Green Light after the Township issues a one paragraph letter-of-intent stating how the Township will add Agriculture as an accepted use in the Highway Commercial Zone. If done by Ordinance, the letter must state the Date of Introduction, the Date of Vote, and the Date of review.

To assist us, the SADC sent a copy of a similar project in Marlboro Twp. in Monmouth County. The Bellone Brothers have spoken to both Ken and Ralph on the progress of their application. We told the Bellones that they should contact the Township Committee for comment on December 3, 2019.

Our facilitator has researched the zoning language for the Highway Commercial Zone along Harding Highway in its relation to its inclusion in the Township's Master Plan. It seems that the current permissible commercial and institutional uses, which do not include agriculture, were adopted when the Township updated the Master Plan in 2004. Prior, in the Master Plan Ordinance of 1999, Agriculture was a permitted use along Harding Highway- East of Grubb Rd (where the Bellone and Danko farms are located). The 2004 permissible uses were not changed when the Township conducted two additional re-examinations of the Master plan in 2007 and 2011.

Grochowski Farm. 260 acres Block 1902 Lot 1 on Fries Mill Rd. This farm is zoned Business Mixed Use and is not in any of our Project Areas. This parcel is on hold while a solar option on the land is in effect-until 2023.

Jeff Thies Farm. Lake Rd. Block 5802 lot 21. 79 acres in the Pinelands. Recently purchased from the Corwonski family. Their application is moving ahead and should receive Green Light approval very soon. Ken conducted an onsite inspection on February 21 to confirm that there were no erosion or water run-off issues along the farm road at the property. One 3.4 acre severable exception along Lake Rd, and one non-severable 1 acre exception along Dutch Mill Rd have been asked for.

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN APPRAISED

LaRose/Durkin Farm. 5802, lot 1. Dutch Mill Rd. 18 acres in the PRR zone of the Pinelands. Their appraisal was certified at the February SADC meeting. We are waiting for the Governor's Review to announce the amount. Rich Martin was able to issue a CMV because the SADC has hired an assistant for him. Catherine LaRose has a mortgage with her mother-Mary Durkin, and issues will be worked out for settlement.

Gorrell Farm LLC. Block 7101 lot 35. 50.5 acres on Harding Highway, Pinelands Highway Commercial and PRR. The Gorrells rejected our offer on January 27, 2020 because of tax implications. The land owners were informed that should those circumstances change, they can submit a new application after two years in 2022.

McCalister Farm, 5701 lot 81 and 5701 lot 17 Dutch Mill Rd and Marshall Mill Rd. 62 acres. Ken has hired West Jersey Title for title work, and Fralinger Eng. to survey the farm. Settlement should be by September 2020.

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN SURVEYED

ABNC, LLC. Corwonski/Miller. Block 5802-21, Dutch Mill Rd. 88 acres. All three parties have passed their resolutions to allow preservation of this farm. A final inspection of the farm by Cindy Roberts and Ken Atkinson, will take place on March 25. It is anticipated that settlement will occur during the first two weeks April.

SADC REPORT

Cindy Roberts reported that Gloucester County has started the preservation process with the Norm Stiles Farm on Coles Mill Rd. in the Janvier section of the township. This farm is not in any of our project areas. This is a very narrow farm, and with our 200 ft. RTF act buffers, it leaves little area for a developer to place homes on the farm.

NEW BUSINESS

Ken Atkinson reported that he will draft Request for Quote forms for the update of our Municipal Planning Incentive Grant (PIG). He will ask DVRPC and

the NJ Land Conservancy for quotes to do the necessary work to update our plan that was last updated in 2009.

Ken met with the new Township Administrator, John Salvatore and gave him a general overview of the Farmland Preservation efforts and projects. Ken has had a past professional working relationship with him.

Ken has had frequent contact, correspondence, and/or meetings with the SADC and the Gloucester County Office of Land Preservation regarding all of our active applications, and to ensure that all of the projects being administered through Franklin Township's Municipal Farmland Preservation Program continue to meet all requirements and protocols. He has also had frequent contact and correspondences with the Agricultural Advisory Committee Secretary Ralph Travaglione to ensure that he is updated and aware on all developments regarding our current Farmland Preservation applications.

The next meeting will be held May 11, 2020 at 7:00pm.

Meeting adjourned 8:15 pm .

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph Travaglione
Secretary