

Township of Franklin Agricultural Advisory Committee
Meeting of May 10, 2021
Minutes

In attendance (5) Michelle Doyle, Harry Lucas, Ralph Travaglione, Ken Atkinson, Amy Mandelbaum.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Michelle Doyle at 7:10 PM after the Flag Salute. OPMAC guidelines were adhered to.

Amy Mandelbaum, SADC Regional Acquisition Coordinator was introduced.

The amended minutes of the last meeting (March 8, 2021) 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 January 2020.

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 January 2020.

Bellone Farm. Block 6805 lot 4.01 is 32 acres.

Block 6805 lot 6 is about 18 acres

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

All three farms are on Harding Highway in the DOWNTOWN area and the front 300 feet of these farms are zoned Highway-Commercial. Their applications were on hold until the passage of O-12-20 on November 10, 2020, we have verified that we are now able to preserve these farms with the SADC. The

language of O-12-20 added all types of agriculture and agriculture businesses as an accepted use in all zones of the township. Ken and Ralph visited all applicants on April 15th. The Pinelands Commission has raised concern that our new ordinance is in conflict with certain elements in their Comprehensive Management Plan. We are now in the process of revising the ordinance. These applications will be complete in the next few weeks and will be soon submitted to the SADC.

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.

Rohs Farm. 30 acres Block 6805 lot 30 on Forest Grove Rd. This farm is zoned RA and is in our PIG area. We informed him that we will be ready to assist him when he feels that the time is appropriate.

Martorano Farm. 138 acres. 38 acres tillable. Block 5901 Lots 8, 90, 92, 94, 95, 96, 79.01. Farm is located both on Tuckahoe and Main Roads in our Main/Piney Hollow PIG area. It is in the Pinelands PRR (3.4) acre zone. They first contacted the County in June of 2019. Ken and Ralph met with them on April 22nd to discuss wetlands that may impact the landowner's requested exception area. They are currently building their home on the property and need to carve out a 3.4 acre exception area. Their exception needs to provide sufficient access to the farm and keeping an adequate distance from the wetlands. Cindy Roberts had stated that this can be a SADC Direct Easement Farm because it has the minimum acres, but its quality score has not been performed, and therefore its application should be submitted as a MUNI PIG until a quality score is completed. Also, if this farm was submitted as a DE, it would have to compete with other farms in the state for preservation, and with a limited budget, it is best to apply for preservation via the MUNI PIG program. However, Amy will score the property to see if it is possible to save the Township its 20% share in the cost of Preservation.

Graiff farm. 22 acres. 21 acres tillable. Block 5702 lot 84 on Central Ave. in the Central Project area. This farm was purchased in September of 2020, and has been actively farmed for 100 years, but lost its Q status. Mr. Graiff has re-entered the Q program via the County Tax Assessor, and we have received confirmation that Q Status will be achieved in January of 2022. This farm must be on the Q list prior to going to settlement for Preservation. Soon, we will contact the Graiffs to start the Preservation process.

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN APPRAISED AND CERTIFIED

LaRose/Durkin Farm, 18 acres on Dutch Mill and Tuckahoe Rds. Block 5802 Lot 1. The SADC certified their appraisal on February 28, 2020. All owners of the property have now signed to accept our offer on Preservation. Mrs. Mary Durkin has spoken to Ken recently and said she will obtain an attorney to represent her at closing. The appraisal value does not cover the full mortgage value, and this must be worked out between the co-applicants. The options include the co-applicant forgiving any excess debt that would remain on the mortgage after the farmland preservation settlement, or the contact landowners securing additional funds through some other means to pay off any excess mortgage balance. Once the mortgage has been paid, the plan is to have Mrs. Durkin's name removed from the deed and add Mr. LaRose's name, SADC has their signed approvals. Title work will indicate if the mortgage was filed with the County.

Jeff Thies Farm. Dutch Mill Rd and Lake Rd. Block 5802 lot 21. 79 acres in the Pinelands. One 3.4 acre severable exception along Lake Rd, and one non-severable 1 acre exception along Dutch Mill Rd. have been asked for. CMV was June 29, 2020. On August 11, 2020, Ken and Ralph made the Township offer to the Thies family. Mr. Thies felt the offer was considerably lower than the ABNC farm that is next to his farm. We extended the time for them to accept our offer to December 11, 2020. We then extended the timeline for the Thieses to accept our offer to January 11, 2021. Ken then gave them a verbal extension, till we could meet. We asked Mr. Thies to speak to his mortgage holder and ask them how much interest would he pay on the loan during his two years of waiting to be re-appraised, should he deny our offer and ask for another appraisal after his mandatory two year wait. A motion was made by Harry Lucas, and seconded by Jim Ketchum, for Ken to send another letter to the Thieses for them to either accept our offer or reject or offer by April 1, 2021. The motion also stated that a no response would constitute a no, and we will never contact them again. Motion carried by unanimous vote. On April 1, Ken and Ralph met with the applicants and explained the situation that many extensions have been graciously given to them to extend their acceptance date, and once again we have allowed them to extend their date to June 1, 2021 (Prior to CMV date of June 29, 2020). Mr. Thies stated that Pinelands Credits are now about \$20,000 per quarter credit, and his LOI has attached 4 quarter credits worth \$80,000 to his 17 acre PAP portion of his farm. We suggested that he look into subdividing his PAP portion from his PRR

portion for a better appraisal on his farm in the future-should he decide not to sign now.

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN SURVEYED

McAlister Farm, 59 acres on Dutch Mill and Marshall Rd. Block 5701 lot 17 and 81. The revised survey package received the SADC's final review. In April, the Township and the County both passed their respective final approvals to confirm Preservation. The State's approval is anticipated to be at its May meeting. We anticipate settlement to be in Mid-June.

PRESERVATION PLAN REVISION

Our 10 year review with The Land Conservancy continues. Ken and Ralph will meet with them on May 18th to take more photos of our PIG Preserved farms. LCNJ hopes to have a draft of the revised plan completed by June 1 and make the 2nd public presentation during the July Planning Board meeting.

SADC REPORT

Amy Mandelbaum was introduced. She handed out her contact info and spoke about Soil Protection Standards. She has 5 active applications in Gloucester County and 3 of them are in Franklin Twp. Our Township has a \$1.3m balance and a reserve of \$1.0m in completeive funds available.

The next meeting will be held July 12, 2021 at 7:00pm.

Meeting adjourned 8:10pm .
Respectfully submitted,
Ralph Travaglione
Secretary