

Township of Franklin Agricultural Advisory Committee
Meeting of July 12, 2021
Minutes

In attendance (7) Michelle Doyle, Harry Lucas, Jim Ketchum, Ralph Travaglione, Ken Atkinson, Amy Mandelbaum, Cindy Roberts.

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

The minutes of the last meeting (May 10, 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. These two 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, Cindy Roberts, Amy Manhelbaum, and Eric Agren met with them on June 10th 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. New GIS maps are being supplied and an application will soon take place. The SADC rated the farm, and it will not be a direct easement application.

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 and we have received confirmation that Q Status will be achieved in January 2022. 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. 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. Each co-applicant shares 50% title. The options include the co-applicant forgiving any excess debt that would remain on the personal loan after the farmland preservation settlement, or the contact landowners securing additional funds through some other means to pay off any excess loan balance. Once the loan has been paid, the plan is to have

Mrs. Durkin's name removed from the deed and add Mr. LaRose's name. Preliminary Title work has indicated that the mortgage was never filed with the County. The key is for Mrs. Durkin to hire an attorney soon to save this application.

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. 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 allowed them to extend their date to June 1, 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. On June 10th, Ken and reps from the SADC & County met with Mr. Thies. All parties agreed that it would be best for the landowner to reject the SADC's CMV and resubmit their application in February 2022. This will be two years from the initial application and will allow new appraisals to be done on the property that will better reflect the PDC's. The County has also agreed to pay for one of the appraisals. A letter of rejection has been forwarded to the SADC. Cindy Roberts suggested that the landowner sell his credits prior to appraisals to get true market value and not an appraised value of the credits. She also suggested that the landowner also should give up one of his housing exceptions for a higher appraisal.

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN SURVEYED

McAlister Farm, 59 acres on Dutch Mill and Marshall Rd. Block 5701 lot 17 and 81. In April, the Township and the County both passed their respective final approvals to confirm Preservation. After a final legal review, the SADC has indicated that it felt that the subdivision resolution that was passed in 2019 by the Township Planning Board, on the Marshall Mill Rd portion of the farm, needed to be changed. We are attempting to have a new Resolution approved by the Planning Board on July 20th. We anticipate settlement to be in the very near future.

PRESERVATION PLAN REVISION

Our 10 year review with The Land Conservancy continues. LCNJ hopes to have a draft of the revised plan completed by August and make the 2nd public presentation during the August Planning Board meeting on the 17th.

SADC REPORT

Amy Mandelbaum handed out her contact info and spoke about the SADC Direct Easement Program. If a farm is greater than 63 acres in Gloucester County, we the Township, will not participate in its Preservation and therefore save our 20% cost share. Amy was joined by our former SADC rep, Cindy Roberts, and together they laid out a proposal of contacting our larger farm owners to address the Direct Easement Program. There was a lengthy discussion on this topic. A marketing plan is being developed to approach these large farm owners. The Faubell Farm in Janvier has contacted the County for Preservation recently, and this 200+ acre farm would come under the Direct Easement Program. Ralph will reach out to Mr. Faubell. Our Township has a \$1.3m balance and a reserve of \$1.0m in completeive funds available from the SADC and we also had in the Township account \$678,000 at the end of 2020.

The next meeting will be held September 13, 2021 at 7:00pm.

Meeting adjourned 8:40pm .
Respectfully submitted,
Ralph Travaglione
Secretary