

MINUTES
MORRIS COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
August 1, 2024
(Held remotely via Webex)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Davis at 7:32 p.m. Members present:

Aimee Ashley Myers
Frank Carrajat
Conor Evans
Thomas Galfo
Harvey Ort
Jay Thomson

Also in attendance:

Peter Nitzsche, RCE
Phil Roehrich, MCSCD
Bob McEwan, MCSCD
Ben Yaskulka, Musconetcong Watershed Assoc.
Charles Roohr, SADC
Steven Bruder, SADC
David Zabak, SADC

Staff in attendance:

Joseph Barilla
Staci Santucci, Esq.
Katherine Coyle

COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW

Chairman Davis announced that in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of the meeting had been provided and filed with the Town of Morristown, the Morris County Clerk, the Clerk of the Morris County Board of County Commissioners, the Daily Record and the Star Ledger and posted on the Morris County website.

Ms. Coyle announced that the meeting was being held remotely via WebEx and was being recorded. Ms. Coyle provided instructions for the public to provide comments during the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion of member Ashley Myers, seconded by member Ort, the Board members approved the June 13, 2024 Open Session meeting minutes. A roll call vote was taken.

Aye: Ashley Myers, Evans, Ort, Thomson and Davis

Nay: None Abstain: Carrajat, Galfo

On motion of member Ashley Myers, seconded by member Ort, the Board members approved the June 13, 2024 Closed Session meeting minutes. A roll call vote was taken.

Aye: Ashley Myers, Evans, Ort, Thomson and Davis

Nay: None Abstain: Carrajat, Galfo

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Ben Yaskulka introduced himself to the Board. Mr. Yaskulka is the Policy and Advocacy Manager for the Musconetcong Watershed Association.

RIGHT TO FARM #1

At this point, on motion member Carrajat, seconded by member Ashley Myers, Ms. Coyle was appointed as temporary Chairperson. A roll call vote was taken.

Aye: Ashley Myers, Carrajat, Evans, Galfo, Ort, Thomson and Davis

Nay: None Abstain: None

Chairman Davis and members Ort and Ashley Myers recused themselves from participating in the Dan Russ matter.

Dan Russ Farm, Washington Township: request for SSAMP; Public Hearing.

Ms. Coyle provided the history of the application and the Public Hearing, and explained the evening's procedures.

Mark Blount, Esq., representing the Applicant, provided a summary the application.

Anthony Sposaro, Esq., representing several neighbors, provided a summary of his clients' concerns and objections.

Members Carrajat, Evans, Galfo and Thomson asked questions of both attorneys and discussed the application.

On motion member Evans, seconded by member Galfo, the Board approved the Dan Russ SSAMP Application. Staff was directed to draft a resolution memorializing the Board's decision. A roll call vote was taken.

Aye: Carrajat, Evans and Galfo

Nay: Thomson Abstain: None

The meeting resumed with Chairman Davis and members Ort and Ashley Myers participating.

Chairman Davis chaired the meeting from this point forward.

At this point, member Evans left the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula – SADC outreach presentation

SADC staff led a presentation regarding the new legislation allowing for the creation of a statewide farmland preservation formula. The SADC hired a consultant to develop the new formula, an alternative valuation method, that would take into account factors currently not reflected in farmland appraisals. SADC staff and the Board discussed factors that should be considered when developing the formula. A draft rule proposal is expected in the spring of 2025.

At this point, SADC staff left the meeting.

RIGHT TO FARM #2

Gooserock Farm, Montville. Twp: request for SSAMP

Ms. Coyle presented a staff report regarding the Gooserock Farm SSAMP application, which addressed the Right to Farm SSAMP process, commercial farm qualifications, and the following staff comments:

1. Staff recommends that the Morris CADB should certify the Gooserock Farm operation as a “commercial farm” as defined in the RTF Act and determine that the activities listed in the SSAMP Application are included on the list of permitted activities set forth in the Act.
2. Staff further recommends that the Morris CADB should proceed to develop a SSAMP for the operation.
3. Staff further recommends that the Morris CADB should submit a request to Montville Township asking the Township to review the application and provide comments.
4. Lastly, staff recommends that the Morris CADB shall hold a public hearing in accordance with the hearing procedures set forth in N.J.A.C. 2:76-2.8 at the appropriate time as determined by the Morris CADB.

On motion of member Thomson, seconded by member Ashley Myers, the Board agreed that the Gooserock Farm operation is a “commercial farm” as defined in the RTF Act, that the activities proposed in the SSAMP Application are included on the list of permitted activities set forth in the Act, and that board staff should submit a request to Montville Township asking the Township to review the application and provide comments. A roll call vote was taken.

Aye: Ashley Myers, Carrajat, Galfo, Ort, Thomson and Davis

Nay: None Abstain: None

REPORT OF DIRECTOR & ATTORNEY

Ms. Coyle informed the Board that monitoring of the Central and North-East regions had been completed and reports had been sent to the SADC. Monitoring of Chester area farms would take place in August.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no comments from the public.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion of member Thomson, seconded by member Ashley Myers, the meeting was adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Coyle". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Katherine Coyle
Director