



County of Burlington

Department of Resource Conservation

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Board of County Commissioners

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Burlington County Agriculture Development Board

Minutes

July 14, 2022

Meeting held in-person at Burlington County Lyceum, 307 High St., Mt. Holly, NJ

Members in Attendance: Phillip Prickett, Kevin Sparkman, Ed Cohen, John Hlubik, Brian Lestini, Pete Johnson, Sherry Dudas, Stephen Specca, Ila Vassallo

(Quorum Established)

Members Absent: Dan Kennedy, Paul Shinn, Randi Rothmel, Jeff Tober, Thomas Stanuikynas, Bill Bamka, Tom Budd

Staff in Attendance: Brian Wilson, Bradley Hansen, Anthony Drollas (Legal Counsel)

Public in Attendance: Cindy Roberts (SADC)

I. Call to Order

A. Opening Statement and Sunshine Law Compliance

Chairman Phillip Prickett (Chairman, PP) called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and indicated that the meeting was held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

B. Flag Salute

a. PP called for the flag salute.

C. Roll Call

a. PP called for Roll Call and Brian Wilson (BW) read the roll call and indicated that a quorum was established.

II. Minutes of

A. May 12, 2022 (Open Session)

- a. **(Motion) Stephen Specca motioned for approval of the May 12, 2022 Open Session Minutes, Ed Cohen seconded the motion. John Hlubik, Pete Johnson, and Ila Vassallo abstained from the vote. The motion passed unanimously otherwise.**

B. May 12, 2022 (Closed Session)

- a. **(Motion) Stephen Specca motioned for approval of the May 12, 2022 Closed Session Minutes, Brian Lestini seconded the motion. John Hlubik, Pete Johnson, and Ila Vassallo abstained from the vote. The motion passed unanimously otherwise.**

III. Staff Update

A. Administrative Update

a. General Items

- i. BW introduced and welcomed Ila Vassallo as the new public member on the Board.

b. FPP Applications

- i. BW reported that there have been 4 applications submitted for preservation for the 2022 round which cover ~219 acres total. He also announced that the Board would be considering the 4 farms for preliminary approval later in the meeting.
- ii. BW reported that the Zimmermann farm (2021 round) was just entering the survey phase and that he hopes the County will close on that farm by late summer or early fall.
- iii. BW reported that the Emmons Home and West farms (2020 round) have yet to be closed on due to a title issue that the landowner needs to finish resolving. The County is prepared to close on the farm otherwise and it should hopefully happen soon.
- iv. BW reported that the Pepper farm (2019 round) which NJCF is taking the lead on and the county is just providing funding towards has still not closed.

c. Stewardship/Monitoring

- i. BW reported again that all of the monitoring for the year has been completed. He announced that follow-ups are underway and that Brad

Hansen (BH) will be bringing the Board the monitoring report/presentation at the September meeting.

- d. Right to Farm
 - i. There was nothing to report on this matter.

- B. Relevant Legislation
 - a. BW referenced assembly bill #2772, Special Occasion Events (SOESs). He reported that the bill has made it to the governor's desk and is waiting for approval. He gave a brief overview of the bill again as a reminder to the Board. A brief discussion ensued between board members and staff.

- C. Communications, Press & Other Items of Interest
 - a. There was nothing to report on this matter.

- D. Economic Development and Regional Planning
 - a. There was nothing to report on this matter.

- E. SADC
 - a. Cindy Roberts (CR) was in attendance. She added a bit of commentary to the SOE bill conversation from the SADC's perspective before moving on to her prepared items for reporting. More discussion on the matter ensued.

 - b. CR reported that the SADC held their annual Appraiser training courses in-person recently for the first time since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. She was pleased to report that they had a lot of diversity within the groups of attendees including many new, young appraisers.

 - c. CR also reported that the SADC reviewed the Soil Protection Standards again at their June meeting. They started with all of the feedback and comments received by the committee. It was acknowledged that Burlington County (BC) made some very good comments/suggestions, specifically surrounding cranberry farm recommendations. CR reported that here was a lot of back and forth between the committee on different items where potential changes could be made, especially concerning soil and water measures that need to be made to prevent erosion or flooding. Currently those measures could count towards soil disturbance limits but the Committee debated whether things like that should count against the farmer. This will be discussed again at the next SADC meeting before anything is voted on and before any formal commentary period. There were some comments from the Board echoing the concerns that efforts

made to improve soil and water measures on a farm could work against a farm owner/operator.

F. Commissioner Update

- a. There was nothing to report on this matter.

IV. Old Business

A. Mahon (Moran) Farm – Chesterfield - Encroachment

- a. BW presented a recap on the encroachment situation. He reminded the board of the details surrounding the encroachment issue that were presented to the Board at the May meeting and that the landowners of the preserved farm and the neighboring property were instructed by the Board to come back to the Board by this July meeting with a plan to resolve the encroachment issue. BW reported that the preserved farm owner and the owners of the neighboring property came back to Staff requesting a timeframe of 2 years to have the garage moved and concrete removed (all encroachments) based upon a few different factors. BW responded to landowners informing them he would bring it to the Board to decide but suggested they put a proposal together with an engineered plan and a timeline of events so that progress can be tracked during those 2 years if the Board agreed to the proposal. The landowners did provide this information for the Board in advance of the meeting. After presenting the details of the landowners' plan to the Board, BW conveyed the Staff recommendation that the Board agree to the proposal. Some discussion ensued between Board members and BW. **(Motion) Ed Cohen motioned to accept the terms of the proposal and Sherry Dudas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

B. Burlington County Deer Management Strategies

- a. BW reported that the on-going conversations at the county level about white-tailed deer overpopulation issues within the county have reached a point at which the County Commissioners are requesting recommendations / confirmation of negative agricultural impacts of the overpopulation from the CADB and County Board of Agriculture. BW presented the list of previously established/proposed strategies being considered for action by the Commissioners:

1. **Maintain the status quo**

2. **Sterilization of female deer** - This option has been attempted throughout the US. Costs are excessively high and results have proven minimal or completely unsuccessful. The NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) does not endorse this approach.
3. **Fencing of properties to keep deer out** - Expensive. Impacts other wildlife. Pushes the problem to neighboring properties. It does nothing to mitigate the problem with deer on roadways.
4. **Contract with a deer management company to cull deer with firearms on County-owned properties.** This program can be successful in very specific geographic areas. Fees typically range \$200-\$500 per deer. Cost prohibitive.
5. **Provide hunting access to select County-Owned properties**
6. **Provide logistical support to Hunters Helping the Hungry (HHH)** – HHH is a non-profit organization whose mission is to accept donations of deer from hunters. The venison is then processed by an approved butcher and then donated to various Food Banks which provide high quality protein to people in need. During the 2021-2022 season HHH provided over 110,000 servings to hungry people in need. At this time HHH needs host sites for refrigerated trailers where local hunters can drop off their donations.

After discussion the Board decided to support and endorse the implementation of a number of the above strategies. **(Motion) John Hlubik made a motion directing Staff to provide comment to the Commissioners on behalf of the Board supporting strategies 4, 5, and 6 from the list above. Pete Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

V. New Business

A. 2022 Preliminary Approvals

BW presented a list of farms Staff received applications for preservation from for the 2022 round. Batch rankings and ranking score criteria were shared. BW continued on to give a description of each farm and, based on the Staff recommendation to grant preliminary approval to all of the farms, asked for preliminary approval resolutions to be adopted by the Board.

- a. Gatley Farm – Shamong Twp.
(Motion) Brian Lestini made a motion to approve the Staff prepared Preliminary Approval Resolution, Steven Specca seconded the motion. The resolution was approved by unanimous vote.
- b. Black Walnut Farm, LLC – Mansfield Twp.

(Motion) Sherry Dudas made a motion to approve the Staff prepared Preliminary Approval Resolution, Steven Specca seconded the motion. The resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

c. Brace Lane Holdings, LLC Farm – Tabernacle Twp.

(Motion) Pete Johnson made a motion to approve the Staff prepared Preliminary Approval Resolution, Ed Cohen seconded the motion. Other than an abstention from Sherry Dudas, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

d. Carty Farm – Florence Twp.

(Motion) Steven Specca made a motion to approve the Staff prepared Preliminary Approval Resolution, Brian Lestini seconded the motion. The resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

B. Comments on Proposed Legislation – A4035

a. BW reported that assembly bill A4035 has made it through the assembly and will be sent to a senate committee. He explained that the bill deals with the SADC Executive Director position and how the that person is selected/appointed. He explained that the Director is currently selected by the SADC. The SADC has public member and farmer member representation. He further explained that currently the position has no term limits associated with it. Bill A4035 would transfer authority to appoint the SADC Executive Director to the Governor. The Director would be selected from a list of 3 names provided by the State Board of Agriculture and the position would come with a 5 year term limit. BW also explained that a Director would be appointed within 12 months of the law taking effect. BW reminded the Board that they have previously instructed Staff to bring noteworthy and/or unusual pieces of legislation to their attention in order to give the Board an opportunity to comment on the legislature if they see fit. A discussion questioning the motivation, details, and ramifications of this bill ensued between Board members and Staff. **Ultimately the Board decided to refrain from providing comment on this matter until they had more information. They directed Staff to compile comments and stances regarding this bill from other CADB's and to bring them back to the Board for further discussion with the end goal of potentially supporting previously conveyed comments from other CADBs and/or Farm Bureau.**

VI. Additional Discussion

A. Sherry Dudas brought up the topic of cannabis and the rules surrounding its cultivation on preserved and unpreserved farms in NJ. **The Chairman instructed Staff to put some information together regarding the current regulations for cannabis and hemp**

cultivation on preserved and unpreserved farms in NJ and bring it back to the Board at the next meeting as an agenda item to be discussed.

VII. Public Comment

A. There was no public comment.

VIII. Closed Session

A. Closed session was not held.

IX. Next Meeting

A. Chairman Prickett announced that the next CADB meeting will be held on September 8, 2022 at 7:30pm. The meeting is to be held in-person at the Burlington County Lyceum again.

X. Adjournment

A. Chairman Prickett adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.