

Township of Franklin Agricultural Advisory Committee
Meeting of January 11, 2021
Minutes

In attendance (7) Michelle Doyle, Ralph Travaglione, Jim Ketchum, Harry Lucas, Cindy Roberts SADC, Ken Atkinson via phone, Jason Brandt (former member).

The meeting was called to order by acting Chairman Ralph Travaglione at 7:05 PM after the Flag Salute. OPMAC guidelines were adhered to.

New members were introduced.

A moment of silence was observed for our former Chairman, Chay Johnston, who passed away on December 8, 2020.

REORGANIZATION

Nominations and elections were held for the 2021 Chairperson and Secretary positions of this committee. Michelle Doyle was elected unanimously as Chair and Ralph Travaglione as Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting (November 9, 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 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.

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 Downtown area and the front 300 feet of these farms are zoned Highway-Commercial. Their applications are on hold. With the passage of O-12-20 on November 10, 2020, we will verify that we are now able to preserve these farms with the SADC Planner Steve Bruder. 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 will soon visit these applicants.

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 will meet with them in the next two weeks to discuss filling out an application. Cindy Roberts stated that this can be a SADC Direct Easement Farm.

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 this farm needs two more years before being preserved. We are waiting for a letter from the County Tax Assessor (Tammy LaTorre) to proceed with an application. This farm must be on the Q list prior to going to settlement for Preservation.

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. We have one year to have the applicants agree to the appraisal, or our appraisers must revisit their appraisal values. Mrs. Mary Durkin has spoken to Ken recently and has agreed to preservation. The appraisal value does not cover the mortgage value, and this must be worked out between the co-applicants. 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,

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. 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.

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN SURVEYED

McAlister Farm, 62 acres on Dutch Mill and Marshall Rd. Block 5701 lot 17. Quit Claim deeds on the four neighboring parcels are complete, and are being forwarded to the County Clerk's office to be recorded. Atlantic City Electric easements are being reviewed. Once this occurs, we will be able to continue with preservation and we anticipate an April settlement.

Our Annual PIG application was submitted and accepted by the deadline of December 15, 2020. This year, the application required a resolution from the Township Committee that acknowledges Preservation activities within the Township.

Our 10 year review with The Land Conservancy continues. LCNJ hopes to make the 2nd public presentation during the March Planning Board meeting.

SADC REPORT

Cindy Roberts reported that there are staff shortages and they are in the hiring process. Farms that were growing sod, can be preserved. However, once a farm has been preserved, it can only grow sod if it was preexisting. Marijuana can be grown on a preserved farm, but only if no Federal funds were used. Hemp is allowed to be grown on all Preserved farms.

The next meeting will be held March 8, 2021 at 7:00pm.

Meeting adjourned 7:35pm .

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph Travaglione
Secretary