

Township of Franklin Agricultural Advisory Committee
Meeting of March 11, 2019
Minutes

In attendance (10) Chay Johnston, Ralph Travaglione, Tim Doyle, Jim Ketchum, Mike Vassallo, Herb Wegner, Guest; Deb Wegner, Cindy Roberts; SADC Acquisitions, Alvin Cloak, David Cloak.

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chairman Chay at 7:02 PM after the Flag Salute. OPMAC guidelines were adhered to.

All guests were introduced.

REORGANIZATION

Elections were held for the 2019 Chairman position of this committee. Chay Johnston and Tim Doyle were each nominated for Chairman and the January Election resulted in a tie. Chay Johnston won the election by one vote.

The amended minutes of the last meeting (January 14, 2019) were approved.

FARM PRESERVATION STATUS

Herb Wegner reported:

Farms That Are Talking To Our Facilitator To Start Preservation:

David Cloak Farm. Block 2703 lots 15&16, Garrison Rd. 11 acres. They have an application. They may not have enough tillable land to qualify. They also own adjacent farmland in Upper Pittsgrove Twp. David is the son of Alvin.

Alvin Cloak Farm. Block 2703 lot 16, 14 acres. They have an application and qualify. They also own adjacent farmland in Upper Pittsgrove Twp. Alvin has been sick.

The Cloaks were present. There was a discussion: with the small size of each farm and the fact that each farm has land also in Salem County, it would be almost impossible to preserve all of their farmland. The farms are too small to do a SADC

Direct Easement. Their only alternative would be to contact a Non Profit. This year's cutoff date is April 8, 2019 for a non profit application. This type of Preservation effort can cross county lines. If they preserve just the Gloucester County land, it could possibly land lock the Salem Co. portion unless an easement is established prior to Preservation.

McCallister Farm. Block 5702 lot 81. 60 acres. Their farm now has 27 acres clear. Cindy requested an update of the project map to indicate where they cleared the land. Their wetlands in the middle of the tract may be identified as Modified Agricultural Wetlands. They have requested a 2.4 acre severable exception for the home site. They may also request an additional non –severable exception on the farm. The McCallisters just purchased an additional 6.4 acres(Block 5702 lot 17) on Marshall Mill Rd that abuts their tract. They plan on preserving both tracts at the same time. The new land is 100% wooded and is not farmland assessed.

Hunsinger Farm. Block 5901 lot 88, 23 acres. They have an application.

LaRose/Durkin Farm. Block Block 5802 lot 1. 18 acres. Mrs. Durkin's attorney, Mike Fitzpatrick, has stated that Mary Durkin will sign the application. There is some question as what type of farm this is, and Herb will do an onsite inspection prior to sending in an application to the SADC.

Soy Unkow. Block 6602, lots 1 & 15. 30 acres. She has completed an application. The front 9 acre parcel has frontage on Piney Hollow Rd and she has requested a one acre non severable exception. On the rear 21 acre lot on Unexpected Rd, She may request a 3.4 acre severable exception for a future building lot in the PRR Pinelands Zone. Both lots must be submitted together because the rear lot is mostly wetlands, and when a developer adheres to the Pinelands wetland setback rule of 300 feet, this greatly reduces the lot yield. Unexpected Rd is an unimproved (non-paved) road. She has spoken to Fred Severs of the Pinelands Commission, waiting for her Pinelands Determination.

Jean Bellone Farm. Block 6805 lot 4.1 is in a trust. 32 acres. Jean has signed with intent to preserve.

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. His farm is not shy on the 50% tillable rule.

Herb would like all of the above four neighboring farms appraised by the same appraiser.

All four farms are on Harding Highway in the Downstown area and the front 300 feet of these farms are zoned Highway-Commercial. Steve Bruder of SADC has stated that our zoning ordinance does not include Ag as a permitted use within this zone. Furthermore, the Right-to-Farm act would not apply here to protect these farmers should a concern arise. Therefore, all four farms are ineligible to be preserved. Chay suggested that the Township do an entire overlay of the Highway Commercial Zone to add Ag via ordinance and not rezoning. Nancy Brendt is looking into this. A question was asked, “Can we use Preservation funds to pay for this Ordinance or rezoning?” The SADC will give a conditional Green Light after the Township issues a one paragraph letter-of-intent stating how the Township will add Agriculture as an accepted use in the Highway Commercial Zone. If done by Ordinance, the letter must state the Date of Introduction, the Date of Vote, and the Date of review. This new Ordinance should nullify O-12-18 Grochowski Farm.

To assist us, the SADC sent a copy of a similar project in Marlboro Twp. in Monmouth County. Tim Doyle has received this copy and has spoken to the Mayor and is in the process of fixing the problem Franklin has with the RTF Act within the Highway Commercial Zone.

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 until the Township satisfies the SADC with the proper language to add agriculture as an accepted use in the Business Mixed Use Zone via an ordinance that is accepted by SADC Planning. The Township Committee passed O-12-18 on November 27, 2018. The ordinance’s language attempted to clarify the presence of agriculture as a permitted use within the Business Zone. This language did not satisfy the SADC.

Gorrell Farm, Block 7101 lot 35. 52.5 acres on Harding Highway, Pinelands Highway Commercial and PRR. The Gorrells intend on having a family dwelling exception on the farm. They may need to purchase a ¼ Pineland credit to build to reduce their wetlands buffer. Cindy agreed to attach a Pinelands Waiver to the appraiser’s worksheets prior to appraisals to help the Gorrells. They are awaiting a Pinelands Letter of Determination. This tract is in a split zone: Pinelands Ag Production 40 acre, and Pinelands Highway Commercial. The SADC would require a pre appraisal meeting with both appraisers because of the split zone

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN APPRAISED

Corwonski/Miller, Block 5802-21, Dutch Mill Rd. 88 acres. Their farm was appraised by Tim Sheehan and Bob Frankenfield. The two appraisal amounts were very dissimilar. The SADC is reviewing these appraisals. A neighboring 70 acre farm has just been sold, this may help with the appraisals.

Garoppo Farm. Block 7101, lot 45, 120 acres. The State has certified an offer to Garoppo, and he has accepted.

Cindy Roberts, SADC, reported that we have \$1.146 million of SADC money earmarked for our township's preservation projects. Cindy handed out the SADC Partner Update that spoke about Beginning Farmer Workshops.

The next meeting will be held May 13, 2019 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned 8:20 pm .

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph Travaglione
Secretary