

Township of Franklin Agricultural Advisory Committee
Meeting of March 13, 2023 minutes

In attendance (5) Michelle Doyle, Ralph Travaglione, Kelly Welsh, Ken Atkinson, Jason Brandt.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Michelle Doyle at 7:05 PM after the Flag Salute. OPMAC guidelines were adhered to.

The minutes of the last meeting (January 9, 2023) were approved.

FARM PRESERVATION STATUS

Ken Atkinson reported

Farms That Are Talking To Our Facilitator To Start Preservation:

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 farm is on hold while a solar option on the land is in effect-until 2023. There has been no contact since February 2019. At the May Zoning Board meeting, Gloucester Solar LLC, appeared on behalf of the Grochowski family for a Conceptual non-formal Application to see if Solar was an accepted use in the Business Mixed Use Zone (BMUO). Under NJ Zoning 66.11, solar is an accepted use in any Industrial Zone. The applicant asked our Board if our BMUO zone included industrial uses. The Board voted 4-3 no, that the language in our BMUO zone does not include Industrial uses and therefore does not accept solar as an accepted use and that any solar applicant would have to come in front of the Board and request a use variance for solar. Recent activity: A large commercial freezer may be built on 50% of the parcel and the remainder of the tract will be a supporting solar field.

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. There has been no contact since November 2020. No recent activity.

Jeff Faubell Farm. 78 acres. Block 702 lots 14 & 15 on Malaga Rd in the Janvier Project Area. Zoned PRR. This farm qualifies as a Direct Easement with the SADC. Mr. Faubell will consider an application in the future. No recent activity.

Shane Garrett farm. Grant Ave. Not in County or Township's ADA. They need to clear cut 1-3 acres to comply for tillable acres and then the County may amend their ADA to include their horse farm in 2024. Cindy Roberts reported that they would have to include an "Animal Waste Management Plan" since they board about 30 horses on their farm. No recent activity.

Previtera Farm. 28 acres. Block 7002 lot 11. Catawba Ave. Forest Grove Project Area. Ken and Ralph met with the owner on July 27, 2022 to discuss the preservation process. They now have an application with the Zoning Board for a variance to allow Marijuana Farming. No recent Preservation activity.

Andy Zenger has a 52 acre farm on Stanton Ave. Block 1101, lot 105. This farm is not in the Township's ADA but is in the County's. Information has been forwarded to Eric Agren at the County. No recent activity.

Nixholm Reality. 67 acres Block 6805, lots 25-29 in Q farm, Airport, Harding Highway, Downtown. The owner talked to Cindy Roberts in June and early November, and is interested. The Q farm portion of the airport is zoned Light Manufacturing (LM) and Ralph spoke to the Economic Development Committee during their August and October meetings to see if the Committee would be in favor of preserving the farm portion of the Airport. This farm is large enough for a SADC Direct Easement. Cindy Roberts is working with the potential applicant. No recent activity.

Carlino Farm. 20 acres Block 6804 lots 27 & 29, Forest Grove Rd, Forest Grove Project Area. Ken and Ralph met with the applicant on September 15, 2022. He currently is completing some minor site work on the property and will contact Ken in the next two or so weeks to start his application.

DiGioia Farm. 15 acres Block 6401 lot 11 zoned PRR, Dutch Mill Rd, Main/Piney Hollow Project Area. They received an application on October 9, 2019. We contacted them in January 2020. They did not respond until early October 2022. DiGioia recently contacted Ken to start application process.

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN GIVEN GREEN LIGHT REVIEW

Thies Farm. 79 acres. Block 5802 lot 22 on Dutch Mill & Lake Rds. Main Piney Hollow Area. Zoned PRR & PAP. A 1 acre non severable exception on Lake Rd. They received their Green Light Approval on June 6, 2022. New

appraisal work is underway and should be completed soon. Settlement may occur at year's end or early 2024.

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN SURVEYED

Graiff Farm. 22 acres. Block 5701 lot 84 on Central Ave. in the Central Project Area. They agreed to a 1 acre non-severable exception on their farm. Green Light approval on April 19, 2022. CMV August 19, 2022. Survey and title work just completed. Draft Deed of Easement is being completed. Settlement should occur by mid 2023.

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 is 31 acres.

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 signed on July 22, 2021, and received a Green Light Review on 10-5-21.

The CMV for these farms was re-certified in September 2022. On December 1, 2022, Ken was given the green light to commence with survey and title work. Survey work is almost complete. Settlement on these farms should occur by mid year.

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN APPRAISED AND CERTIFIED

Martorano Farm. 138 acres, 38 acres clear. Block 5901-Lots 8, 90, 92, 94, 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. Their application received a Green Light Review on 10-5-21. Martorano has agreed to preservation after a CMV of December 21, 2022. Survey and title work contracts have been awarded and work will begin soon. Settlement should occur by year's end.

LaRose Farm, 18 acres on Dutch Mill and Tuckahoe Rds. Block 5802 Lot 1. The SADC certified their appraisal on February 28, 2020, and we were unable to go to settlement by 2-28-22, so updated appraisals were ordered. In early September '22, a new application was completed on the LaRose Farm. The SADC issued a new Green Light Review on September 20, 2022 and the SADC issued a new CMV (Dec. 21, 2022) with the new owner. Title and survey work has been approved by the Township Committee, and work will soon begin.

Settlement should occur by year's end. Applicant first contacted AAC in July of 2017.

PRESERVATION PLAN REVISION

Between November 2022 and present, Ralph sent out the digital format of our ten year plan to: all current AAC members, its facilitator, all Township Planning Board members and its secretary, the Township Engineer, the Township Planner, The Planning Board Solicitor, the County Farmland Preservation Coordinator, The Township Clerk, the Township Environmental Chairperson, SADC's Cindy Roberts and Steve Bruder (Planner), the Township EDC members, the Township communications coordinators, The Sentinel, the Township Zoning officer and Zoning Board members, Secretaries of all Boards, Ken's employer (South Jersey Land and Water Trust) Twp. Solicitor, and the Twp. Administrator, Many of the above have also received hard copy editions of the plan.

Ken has had numerous correspondences with representatives of the Township's Administrative and Finance Offices, the Township's Municipal Solicitor, representatives from the Township Planning Board, and the Secretary from the Township's AAC on the projects and other items indicated in his Activity Report. He continues to have frequent contact with representatives of the SADC and the Gloucester County Office of Land Preservation to ensure that all of the projects being administered through Franklin Township's Municipal Farmland Preservation Program meet all requirements and protocols.

SADC REPORT

Cindy Roberts attended a SADC Stewardship workshop in Woodstown on February 14, 2023. Eric and Ralph also attended. Discussions were had on the difficulties after a farm is Preserved.

Cindy Roberts is working with Eric at the County on the Warren Nothnick Farm in Malaga on Nothnick La. The farm was subdivided in April 2004 and there are farm buffers along the perimeter of the 18 acre farm that the SADC will not pay to Preserve. The Planning Board Solicitor has investigated PB-04-02. Eric at the County initially stated that he could pay the land owner for the affected buffer acres but would rather have the buffers removed if possible. Mr. Borelli has stated that it would take a Court Order to remove Nothnick's deed's restrictive language.

Cindy would like to promote a Direct Easement Program with the larger farms (greater than 63 acres) in our Township. The SADC has the funds. With a SADC acquisition, there is no cost share with the Township. She is currently working with Nixholm Realty. 67 acres Block 6805 lots 25-29 in Q farm at the Downtown Airport. Zoned Light Manufacturing (LM).

NEW BUSINESS

Ralph, Ken and Eric attended a NJ Pinelands Seminar on March 7, 2023 to discuss the Preservation Process within the Pinelands. The meeting was attended by the Executive Director of the Pinelands (Susan Grogan) and the Chairperson of the Pinelands Commission (Laura Matos).

The next meeting will be held May 9, 2023 at 7:00pm.

Meeting adjourned 7:45 pm .

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph Travaglione

Secretary