Township of Franklin Agricultural Advisory Committee  
Meeting of September 9, 2019  
Minutes

In attendance (7) Chay Johnston, Ralph Travaglione, Jim Ketchum, Mike Vassallo, Tim Doyle, Herb Wegner, Guest; Deb Wegner.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chay at 7:00 PM after the Flag Salute. OPMAC guidelines were adhered to.

The minutes of the last meeting (May 13, 2019) were approved.

FARM PRESERVATION STATUS

Herb Wegner reported:

Farms That Are Talking To Our Facilitator To Start Preservation

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

LaRose/Durkin Farm. Block Block 5802 lot 1. 18 acres. Herb and Cindy Roberts have done and onsite inspection. Mrs. Durkin has finally filled out all parts of their application, and any day now, the SADC should Green Light this project and we will prepare for appraisals.

Soy Unkow. Block 6602, lots 1 & 15. 30 acres. She has withdrawn her application. Soy met with Cindy Roberts SADC and with Ralph to discuss her future craft beer tasting room on her farm. It may have to be an exception.

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.
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. 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. Tim has forwarded the e-mail chain to Mr. Armano- the new Township Solicitor. The Bellone Brothers have spoken to both Herb and Ralph on the progress of their application. We told the Bellones that they should contact the Township Committee for comment.

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. The Grochowski Trust has recently signed an option with a solar power company and there may be no chance to enter this parcel into farmland preservation.

Norm and Debra Stiles Farm. Coles Mill Rd in the Janvier section. This 34 acre farm is not in any of our project areas. Herb has been instructed to forward this application to the county.

Jeff Tisch Farm. Lake Rd. Block 5802 lot 21. 79 acres. Recently purchased from the Corwonski family. Mr. Tisch has contacted Eric at the County for an application. This farm is eligible for a direct easement, but the Township may handle the application through the PIG grant.

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN APPRAISED
Gorrell Farm. Block 7101 lot 35. 52.5 acres on Harding Highway, Pinelands Highway Commercial and PRR. Molinari and Jones appraised this parcel. The two appraisals were over $2,300 apart. We are awaiting Rich Martin of SADC to certify their appraisal.

McCalister Farm, 5701 lot 81 and 5701 lot 17 Dutch Mill Rd and Marshall Mill Rd. 62 acres. Tim Sheehan and Bob Frankenfield have finished their appraisals and sent them in to the SADC. The two appraisals were over $4,000 apart. We are awaiting Rich Martin of SADC to certify their appraisal. Mr. McCalister has applied for a minor subdivision on lot 17 on Marshall Mill Rd. Jay Mounier of the Environmental Commission has many concerns with the variance for frontage.

FARMS THAT HAVE BEEN SURVEYED

ABNC, Corwonski/Miller. Block 5802-21, Dutch Mill Rd. 88 acres. Todd Adams of Frailinger Surveying has completed his work. The ROW for both Dutch Mill Rd and Lake Rd has been forecast to be widened from 33.5’ to 50’ via Jim Winckowski of CME. There will be two 1 acre non severable exceptions on the property with a net deed of easement of 86.048 acres. Title work was prepared by West Jersey Title John Burke.

FARMS THAT HAVE GONE TO SETTLEMENT

Garoppo Farm. Block 7101 lot 45, 120 acres. Went to settlement in June with the SADC buying the development rights.

FARMLAND FACILITATOR STATUS

Herb reported that he had a conversation with Nancy Brent (Township Administrator) about his departure date. Herb replied that he wants to be there for the farmers during September and October. With the General Election date of November 5, 2019, Herb has agreed that he will attend the next Ag Advisory meeting on November 11 and then step down as the township’s facilitator. Plans are underway for the township to hire his replacement.

COMMUNITY DAY
This committee has agreed not to man a booth at community day on September 21, 2019. Ralph reported that several members have worked our booth in the past five years and not a single application resulted.

The next meeting will be held November 11, 2019 at 7:00pm.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph Travaglione
Secretary