

# Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board Meeting

February 14, 2019 @ 8:00 pm

314 Route 12 County Complex  
Building #1 | Assembly Room  
Flemington, New Jersey

## **Members in Attendance:**

Dave Bond  
Robert Hoffman Jr.  
Susan Blew  
David C. Kyle  
Liz Schmid  
John Van Nuys  
Gerry Lyness  
Ted Harwick  
Kevin Milz  
Megan Muehlbauer

## **CADB Staff Present:**

Shana Taylor, Esq. County Counsel  
Aaron Culton, Esq. County Counsel  
Bob Hornby, CADB Administrator  
Adam Bradford, CADB Staff

## **Open Public Meeting Act:**

### **Chairman Bond opened the meeting at 8:00 p.m. and read the Open Public Meeting Act:**

*"This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act. Adequate notice has been provided by prominently posting and maintaining so posted throughout the year on the first floor of the County Administration Building, Main St., Flemington, New Jersey a public place reserved for such announcements, and by mailing on or before January 11, 2019, to The Hunterdon Democrat, Star Ledger, The Trenton Times, The Courier News and The Express Times newspapers, and TAP Into it newspaper and designated by the Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board to receive such notices, and by filing with the Hunterdon County Clerk a schedule of the times and dates of such meetings."*

## **Pledge of Allegiance:**

**Roll Call: Absent; John Perehinys, Marc Phillips, Roger "Forest" Locandro**

## **Approval of Minutes**

- Liz Schmid made a MOTION to approve the January 10th minutes. John Van Nuys SECONDED. All in favor MOTION Passed

## **Communications and Administrative Business:**

- **CADB Staff update**
  - Bob Hornby handed out a flyer for **RCPP** and stated he needs to make corrections as he had missed some quotes at the last meeting. The Regional Conservation Partnership Program works with conservation partners on water resources. New Jersey Water Supply Authority is in charge of the Raritan Basin which includes Spruce Run, Round Valley, and D&R Canal. They are accepting grants. If interested contact Bob or Kevin Milz. Or them directly. Kevin Milz stated it includes several different best management practices teaming up with federal money and NJ Water supply authority also contributing. Liz

Schmid asked about setting goals and outcomes. Bob answered, program seems to be much more long term oriented. They also work thru conservation partners rather than directly with townships, they like to work with NJ Water Supply. Kevin Milz stated coalition comes up with a water shed, i.e. Musconetcong, Raritan, Wickecheoke watershed they look at where the needs are especially pressing when it comes to agriculture where they are getting run off nutrients, pollutants. Potentially, where they think it needs to be fixed.

- **Jannsen/Peacefield** (Alexandria) Adam is still working on. 3 of the 4 farms have survey comments returned from the SADC.
- **Maresca/Martin** (Delaware) – Final approval from SADC on Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>. RFP for survey is out right now.
- **Hope Hill** (Franklin) – Is going thru title work.
- **America’s Grow a Row** (Franklin) – CADB gave final approval last month, Freeholders gave approval on Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>. Will be in front of SADC on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Put out survey to get ahead, takes about a month to get a bid on it, can keep moving on it instead of waiting another month.
- **Feeley** (Franklin) – Franklin passed a resolution they were not opposed to the preservation, but didn’t want to put money in it. It moved to a Direct Easement Program. Should no longer be a funding short fall. Was a 2018 Planting round
- **DuBrow** (Franklin) – Township did approve spending will have a cost share. Was thinking ALE funding, but since they are funding it, it should go a lot faster.
- **Michisk** (Franklin) – Closed 1/29, 41 acres @ 7,900/acre.
- **Grochowicz** (Hampton, Glen Gardner, Bethlehem) – Working its way through local final approvals, Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> Glen Gardner, Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> in Bethlehem, March 11<sup>th</sup> in Hampton. Will come in front of CADB on March 14<sup>th</sup>. The Highlands money is confirmed, so they have the funding.
- **Rolph** (Holland) SADC Final approved January 24, survey and title before closing.
- **Silva** (Holland) - Hung up on Cell Tower lease. County Counsel and SADC have been trying to get thru to AT&T to modify those leases. County Counsel said they are reviewing it with AT&T legal.
- **Dalrymple** (Kingwood) – Close to ALE closing.
- **Kevin Milz** gave update on various violations. Monitoring several. Most due to the wet weather, could not mow, thus had weed infestations. A good portion of those did get mowed off. Some didn’t get mowed, but no infestations. There were wet areas that were very difficult to get into. He is working with landowners to get a commitment to try and get it mowed this year. Weather will hopefully not be as bad as last year.
  - Large parcel in **Franklin** 300 acres, deed of easements owned by the county and state, looks like it hasn’t been farmed in the last year or so. Is Farmland assessed. Had a hard time contacting landowner. Finally got in touch with property owner. He is working with Kevin to turn things around. Kevin got him in touch with a local farmer who is maintaining the farm, and the field now has wheat and rye, lost farmland assessment for the year.
  - 3 in **Delaware** that couldn’t get harvested because of the wet conditions.
  - 1 **Holland** – Tenant operator hasn’t maintained fields. Full of weeds.
  - 1 **Alexandria** – Farmable area farmed, but needs mowing in other areas. Property for sale. Owners getting divorced, owner is trying to come to a deal with PennEast Pipeline before she sells.

### **More serious violations:**

- **Delaware Twp.** Bringing in top soil to fill in nursery stock. Piling top soil. Soil Conservation shut them down. A lot of debris to clean up, encroached on wet land. Should be ok if let go. Waiting to hear from DEP. After cleanup landowner wants to start growing vegetables and nursery stock.
- **Readington Twp.** Newer owner on existing preserved farm. Wants to increase livestock. Backs up to wetlands. Went into the buffer area, owner working with engineer/environmental engineer. Kevin waiting to hear back from DEP and engineers.
- **Holland Twp.** New preserved farm in good shape, except for lower property consisting of about 20 acres that was never maintained, about 5 years infested with Russian Olive growth. About 70 feet. Landowners great to work with. Working to get it cleared and seeded with grass /hay.

### **Prosecutor Anthony Kearns** gave an update on Marijuana Legislation.

- Marijuana much more dangerous today then years ago. More potent today.
- Comes in other forms; wax, oils with 90% THC
- Law enforcement in Colorado wishes it was never legalized.
- Hard to prove DUI. Can't do a breathalyzer like they can with alcohol.
- How to keep public safe?
- Teens/young adults more likely to use.
- Increased tax revenue vs. higher costs.
- More law enforcement will be needed.
- Cities such as Newark and Camden do not want dispensaries.
- Need to know more about it before they agree to it.

### **Correspondence:**

- **Federal Farm Service** declared Hunterdon County a disaster area for July 20th – September 27, 2018. October 14<sup>th</sup> deadline to apply.

### **SADC Comments:**

- SADC – Bob Hornby had a correction from last month's meeting, 49-acre cut off for Priority Farm, lesser amounts allowed need permission from the board. Above 49 acres move forward until final approval.
- No representative from the SADC, Bob Hornby gave an update on their behalf
  - **McKee Farm** (Lebanon Twp.) – Closed Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> 62 acres \$6,000/acre
  - **Perrine Farm** (Alexandria) expect to close next week.
  - **US Agrinova** (Kingwood/Delaware) Expected next Week
- 3 New Farms accepted into the program.
  - **Alexandria Air Field** (Alexandria)
  - **Feeley Farm** (Franklin) used to be PIG farm
  - **Ecker Farm** (Kingwood)
- Second **workshop** for beginning farmers thru American Farmland Trust – February 28<sup>th</sup> from 6 – 9 pm at NJ Dept. of Ag. on Warren St. in Trenton.

### **Chair Comments:**

- None at this time

**Old Business:**

- None at this time

**New Business:**

- **Hunterdon County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan Update**, last done in 2008 it's part of the master plan. Under new PIG rules it must be re-examined and updated every 10 years. Form a subcommittee consisting of Planning Board, Economic Development to update. It's going to be an ongoing project. Some of it is just statistics, maps, and tables that need to be updated. Bob went over a timeline of steps to be taken. May take more than a year.
- **Municipal and County PIG Funding** Bob referred to a spreadsheet overview of how other counties in NJ fund their PIG programs. Hunterdon is the only one that there is little difference between MPIG and CPIG in the way they are funded. 13 counties operate without municipal cost share. Breakdown of what was spent since 1985 for Hunterdon County. Farmland Preservation consistently under budget. Freeholders are generous with the Farmland Preservation budget. County Counsel stated that the Freeholders need to agree to make any funding allocation changes.
- **2019 Planting Round Deadline** – In previous years, Spring round voting was May, Bob is recommending April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for application to allow for a May vote in 2019. Robert Hoffman Jr. made MOTION for Application deadline to be April 1<sup>st</sup>. Liz Schmid SECONDED. All in favor. Chairman Bond called for a Roll Call.

*ROLL CALL                      MOVED      SECONDED                      AYES                      NAYS                      ABSTAIN      ABSENT*

David Bond, Chair			X			
Robert Hoffman, Jr., Vice Chair	X		X			
Susan Blew			X			
Marc Phillips						X
John Pehinys						X
Gerry Lyness			X			
John Van Nuys			X			
Dave Kyle			X			
Liz Schmid		X	X			
Ted Harwick			X			
Roger "Forest" Locandro						X

**8 IN FAVOR, 3 ABSENT, MOTION CARRIED**

**Right to Farm Matters:**

- None at this time

**Board Comments:**

- Board member asked if they could legally deny a preserved farm from growing marijuana. County Counsel stated that restricting what's grown on the preserved farm you would have to change the deed of easement and technically you are not purchasing those rights you are purchasing everything but the right to determine the ag product. No Right to Farm protection. Not compliant to federal law.
- Would it be out of line to write a letter in opposition to growing marijuana? Counsel stated did not see why not. NJ Dept. of Ag. has a link for public comment on hemp, not marijuana. Megan Muehlbauer stated big corporations are already making plans to buy properties to grow. Would be very hard to stop them. John Van Nuys made MOTION to write a letter in opposition of marijuana growing in NJ. No SECOND, MOTION died.
- Request was made for staff to write a Thank You to Prosecutor Kearns for his presentation.

**Public Comments:**

- Bill Fritsche (Alexandria Twp.) offered an outside perspective on the marijuana industry.

**Adjournment:**

- MOTION for adjournment made by Gerry Lyness, Liz Schmid SECONDED. All in favor by voice vote.

**ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED.** Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:20.