

Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board Meeting

May 9, 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
Ted Harwick
David C. Kyle
Gerry Lyness
Marc Phillips
Liz Schmid
John Van Nuys
Kevin Milz

CADB Staff Present:

Shana Taylor, Esq. County Counsel
Aaron Culton, Esq. County Counsel
Bob Hornby, CADB Administrator
Adam Bradford, CADB Staff
Carrie Fellows, Planning Dept. Director
Ken Bogen, Supervising Planner

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 TAPinto 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; Roger "Forest" Locandro, John Perehinys, Megan Muehlbauer

Approval of Minutes

- Liz Schmid made a MOTION to approve the April 11th minutes with minor corrections. Susan Blew SECONDED. MOTION Passed, All in Favor

Communications and Administrative Business:

- **CADB Staff update**
 - Adam has been working on **Peacefield** (Alexandria). Is moving forward, has all the surveys, is at SADC for closing review.
 - **Alice Miller Farm** (Alexandria) – Survey complete, SADC has reviewed it, on to closing review.
 - **Goeckeler** (Kingwood) – Delay on appraisal on federal level, has been cleared up now. Stefanie Miller (SADC), Jackie Middleton and Stephanie (HLT) and Bob did the Baseline report on May 7th, it basically establishes the condition of property at the time of preservation.

- **Woodmeier** Farm (West Amwell) - Direct easement 66 acres closed April 3rd the State paid 100% of it. 6th Hunterdon farm for 2019, 406 acres YTD. Of \$2.6 mil spent \$2.3 mil has been paid by SADC, he would like to thank them for their cooperation and work in Hunterdon County.
- Bob met with the **Readington Twp. Ag Advisory and Open Space Committee**, they have passed Master Plan update, it calls for 50% of the township to be preserved farmland or open space. Which is positive feedback to get back from a municipality.
- Adam stated **Raritan** is finalizing their Farmland Plan, he reviewed mapping the project area, target farms, continuity with properties they already have, then looked at the State and County files to make sure that they matched up.
- On May 2nd **NJRC&D** recognized Buffalo River Farm in Readington Twp. and Cotton Cattle Farm in Bethlehem as River Friendly Farms. They were highlighting the work that the farms have done along with NRCS to overcome some difficult conditions on both farms in terms of wash outs and soil conservation. There was a positive response from the community.

Correspondence:

- None at this time

SADC Comments:

- **SADC** – Stefanie Miller stated she and Bob have visited almost all townships in Hunterdon County. Still waiting to visit Tewksbury about outreach to some of the eligible farms that are still out there. Collecting history, how best to approach farms that are not yet preserved, sending out flyers or a letter on SADC letterhead to encourage them to call and get a conversation started. Over past year they have had workshops, a few of will be up on the SADC website, turnout was good. Most that attend are in their 40's – 60's. SADC is also looking at next stage of Right to Farm outreach. SADC are attending workshops, meetings on demand, thinking about doing power point or video that will be on YouTube, so it can be accessed at any time, additional guidance documents, targeting organizations and groups of people for these workshops. Funding is still waiting for Governor's approval. Bill S2920 to extend Highlands, it increases stewardship 3 – 4%, gives farms Highlands credits, makes them eligible for Stewardship grants.

Chair Comments:

- Amending meeting agenda, moving to Right to Farm Matters before Old Business

Right to Farm Matters:

- Commercial Farm Certification
 - **Khiimori Farm** Tewksbury Twp. Block 19 Lots 11.05, 11.06 & 11.07. Represented by Anthony Sposaro, Esq. He could not attend this evening, so Steven Gruenberg is covering for him. The farm is a horse training/breeding operation, crop production and woodland management. It is 5 acres for boarding, 71.72 acres farmed, makes more than \$2,500 annually, is farmland assessed eligible and agriculture is a permitted use in the zone. It is in the Highlands District. Property is deed restricted for agricultural use. Eventually there will be an application for Site Specific Agricultural Management Plan application, just here tonight, for Commercial Farm Certification. Chair Bond asked Bob if he has all the paperwork, Bob stated that he has everything, and he and Aaron have gone over everything, he has no comment on them. County Counsel Shana Taylor stated they should go over the proofs of the submitted paperwork in support of the application. They

have the farmland assessment forms for 2018 and application for 2019. She asked if the approximate acreage was 72 acres, Mr. Bruin stated it was. Proof of income is approximately \$13,000/yr. Confirmed he submitted the Deed of Easement, and that they are in the HL zone and that agriculture was a primary permitted use. Liz Schmid made a MOTION to approve, Susan Blew SECONDED. Chairman Bond asked for a Roll Call Vote:

ROLL CALL MOVED SECONDED AYES NAYS ABSTAIN ABSENT

David Bond, Chair			X			
Robert Hoffman, Jr., Vice Chair					X	
Susan Blew		X	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, 1 ABSTENSION, 2 ABSENT, MOTION CARRIED

- o **Clucas Farms LLC** Tewksbury Twp. Block 23 Lot 31. Represented by Anthony Sposaro, Esq. He could not attend this evening, so Steven Gruenberg is covering for him. The farmer is farming over 4,000 acres in the area, this lot is Block 23 Lot 31 and is approximately 4 acres, however applicant purchased property across the road which is 45 acres and farmland assessed. It was discussed with counsel that with the purchase it is contiguous therefore the 4 acres is eligible to be farmland assessed. The farm is a grain and hay operation. There is an eventual application for reconstruction of 2nd of 4 silos that are existing on site. Supplied proof that agriculture is a permitted use. County Counsel Shana Taylor referenced discussions Tony Sposaro had directly with the municipality, this property will be farmland assessed given the fact that he has purchased the 45 acres across the street. She confirmed that they have submitted several tax returns showing adequate income. Member Van Nuys asked if they were talking about silo's or grain bins? Chairman Bond confirmed it's a grain bin. He stated that there is a big difference between a silo which is permanent and a grain bin which is not, he thinks this falls under the classification of a grain bin. It will be clarified at a later date. Application says silo. Just here tonight for a Commercial Farm Certification. David Kyle made a MOTION to approve, Marc Phillips SECONDED. Chairman Bond asked for a Roll Call vote.

ROLL CALL

MOVED

SECONDED

AYES

NAYS

ABSTAIN

ABSENT

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

8 IN FAVOR, 1 ABSTENSION, 2 ABSENT, MOTION CARRIED

Old Business:

- **Hunterdon County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan Update**
 - Hunterdon County Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan Update. Bob stated that there is a possibility of a grant for the new Farmland Plan. SADC doesn't know numbers yet.

New Business:

- **2019 Planting Round Vote**

- **Long Farm** Franklin Twp. Block 39 Lots 1, 1.10 & 5.01. CFIG, 59 acres, 5-acre exception area, will be 54 acres preserved. Scored 59.6, there are 4 farms in the buffer area, 1 is contiguous. Existing house and barns in the exception area, it is 3 different lots, has frontage on Sky Manor Rd. and Pittstown Rd. Member Kyle accompanied staff on a sight visit. The property is a horse farm with some crop acreage. Good size piece of land, all being farmed, looks good. Member Van Nuys stated that the lots need to be merged together before closing. Liz Schmid made a MOTION to approve, Gerry Lyness **SECONDED** on condition that the lots be merged before closing. Chairman Bond asked for a Roll Call Vote:

ROLL CALL MOVED SECONDED AYES NAYS ABSTAIN ABSENT

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

8 IN FAVOR, 1 ABSTENSION, 2 ABSENT, MOTION CARRIED

- **Stryker Farm**, Franklin Twp. Block 30 Lot 13. There was a question about the size of the easement area, why preserve it? Doesn't look like there is much to be developed. Bob stated there is possibility of 2 lots because they have access to Tinnes Ct. It is the highest scoring farm in the round at 75.4. Member Hoffman stated that this farms just seems like a waste of money. 5 farms in buffer, 3 contiguous, access onto 2 different roads. 100% prime soils. If it was subdivided, low chance it would be farmed. If you look at preservation as not just anti-development but as a way to keep farming as an active industry, that's a way to justify the cost. There are limitations on the property, that will be reflected on the appraisals that come back. Member Kyle stated it has potential for one or two lots, gently rolling piece of land, great soils, if someone wanted a small piece of land for agriculture, this one would be it. Is currently being farmed. Liz Schmid made a MOTION to approve Dave Kyle SECONDED. Chairman Bond asked for a Roll Call Vote:

ROLL CALL MOVED SECONDED AYES NAYS ABSTAIN ABSENT

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

6 IN FAVOR, 2 NAYS, 1 ABSTENSION, 2 ABSENT, MOTION CARRIED

- **Thomas Farm** East Amwell Block 21 Lot 13. – 36 acres 2 ½ acre exception area. No existing structures on land. Second highest score in the round, 6 farms in buffer, 3 contiguous. 65% state wide soils, 2% prime. Member Kyle stated its all good farmland in that neighborhood, its surrounded by farms. Only suggestion is to move the driveway from where the owner wants to put it. There is an existing driveway through the woods, if the owner moves it, it might be too close to a culvert. If they put it there, they will also lose farm land. The county requests a 25’ easement from the furthest point of the culvert under the road. John Van Nuys made a MOTION to approve Marc Phillips SECONDED. Chairman Bond MOTION passes on the condition that the proposed exception driveway be decided before final approval. Chairman Bond asked for a Roll Call Vote:

ROLL CALL MOVED SECONDED AYES NAYS ABSTAIN ABSENT

David Bond, Chair			<i>X</i>			
Robert Hoffman. Jr., Vice Chair			<i>X</i>			
Susan Blew			<i>X</i>			
Marc Phillips		<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>			
John Perehinys						<i>X</i>
Gerry Lyness			<i>X</i>			
John Van Nuys	<i>X</i>		<i>X</i>			
Dave Kyle					<i>X</i>	
Liz Schmid			<i>X</i>			
Ted Harwick			<i>X</i>			
Roger “Forest” Locandro						<i>X</i>

8 IN FAVOR, 1 ABSTENSION, 2 ABSENT, MOTION CARRIED

- **Bowlby Farms** Raritan Twp., SADC Direct Easement with County Contribution, split into three farms. Applications named by their lot numbers 19, 81 & 19.02, Lot 19.02 is below what SADC usually picks for direct easements, there is a separate pot of money they can use, it will allow the SADC to move forward and get the same appraisers on all three, also SADC rounds are offset from CADB. By us accepting this now, it could move forward and be accepted in their round in June. They are 3 separate applications, if it moves forward State will absorb the cost for appraisals, surveys, all the soft costs, and hold the easement after closing.
- **Bowlby (19)** Raritan Block 71, Lot 19 is 50.7 acres with a 6.7-acre exception area around the farm complex, leaving 44 acres preserved. Score of 71.3, 5 farms in buffer, access from 2 roads Leeds Rd. and with a lot of road frontage on Reaville Rd. Chairman Bond asked if water and sewer were available, Bob stated that it is on the edge of sewer district, Mr. Bond commented that it is a highly developable area then. David Kyle made a MOTION, Ted Harwick SECONDED, Chairman Bond asked for a Roll Call vote.

ROLL CALL MOVED SECONDED AYES NAYS ABSTAIN ABSENT

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

8 IN FAVOR, 1 ABSTENSION, 2 ABSENT, MOTION CARRIED

- **Bowlby (19.02)** Raritan Township Block 71 Lot 19.02 – 21 acres, 3-acre exception for future use, its right on the road so no worries about a driveway, total of 18 acres preserved. Scored 62.4, 5 farms in the buffer. Currently no structures on the property, Dave Kyle stated that it is all farmland, potential wetlands in woods. Bob stated there is a gas pipeline running east/west, and power lines running north/south. Ted Harwick made a MOTION, John Van Nuys SECONDED. Chairman Bond asked for a Roll Call vote

ROLL CALL MOVED SECONDED AYES NAYS ABSTAIN ABSENT

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

8 IN FAVOR, 1 ABSTENSION, 2 ABSENT, MOTION CARRIED

- **Bowlby (81)** Raritan Township Block 71 Lot 81. Biggest of three parcels at 101 acres, 4-acre exception area, for a total of 97 acres preserved. Score of 67.8, 5 farms in buffer, no structures on property. Exception area has road frontage so no consideration for a driveway. Power lines cut through north/south. No hard number on County contribution. John Van Nuys made a MOTION, Susan Blew SECONDED, Chairman Bond stated it passes on condition non-severable exception area location questioned & agreed upon. Chairman Bond asked for a Roll Call vote.

	<i>ROLL CALL</i>	<i>MOVED</i>	<i>SECONDED</i>	<i>AYES</i>	<i>NAYS</i>	<i>ABSTAIN</i>	<i>ABSENT</i>
David Bond, Chair				X			
Robert Hoffman, Jr., Vice Chair						X	
Susan Blew			X	X			
Marc Phillips				X			
John Perehinys							X
Gerry Lyness				X			
John Van Nuys	X			X			
Dave Kyle				X			
Liz Schmid				X			
Ted Harwick				X			
Roger "Forest" Locandro							X

8 IN FAVOR, 1 ABSTENSION, 2 ABSENT, MOTION CARRIED

Public Comments:

- Les Giese is the chair of Hunters Helping the Hungry, venison processor, and gives the meat to food banks, 27,000 lbs. last year. Wanted to make the Board aware of the program Hunters Helping the Hungry. Farmers and hunters can bring the meat to be processed and donate it to food pantries. Has cards and passed them out after meeting. Has a website huntershelpingthehungry.org, can refer to that for more information. 1/3 of processing cost paid by grant, 2/3 via fundraising, about \$75 per deer total.
- Les Guise continued, looking for farmers for land owned by Clinton Township.
- Susan Blew recommended The American Farm on History Channel.

Adjournment:

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

ALL IN FAVOR, MOTION CARRIED. Meeting Adjourned at 9:10 PM