

**Ocean County Agricultural Development Board
Minutes of February 8, 2023
Manchester Courtroom, Manchester Township**

Attendance: Casey Hunter, Vice Chair; Martin Lynch (OCADB); Kathleen Sucharski (OCADB); Glenn Riccardi (OCADB); Jeff Vogel (OCADB); Mark Villinger (OCPLD); Timothy Gleason (OCPLD); Thomas Thorsen (OCPLD); Mat Thompson (County Counsel); Dr. Stephen Yergeau (OC Ag Ext); Jessica Pinto (OCSCD). Public Attendees: Diane Vogel

I. Flag Salute

II. Call to order and Compliance with Open Public Meetings Act- Casey Hunter (Vice Chair) called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm by declaring a quorum and stating the Open Public Meetings Act requirements had been met.

III. Roll Call

IV. Approval of Minutes

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Lynch to approve the January 11, 2023 minutes. Ms. Sucharski seconded. Roll Call. All in favor, motion carried.

V. New Business

- 2022 Inspection Follow-up Notifications – Mr. Thorsen informed the Board that last year the Magnolia/Goff and Ervin/Good Tree farms had fields growing in with shrubs and trees. Both farms stated they were underway of taking care of this issue, but according to recent imagery it does not look like there has been any progress at Ervin/Good Tree Farms. Magnolia/Goff on the other hand has animals thinning the field and plans to remove the vegetation. These two farms will receive a letter regarding this issue when inspection letters are sent. Mr. Villinger stated that the letter will remind the farms these areas need to remain available for agriculture consistent with the deed of easement. Mr. Hunter questioned when the 2023 annual inspections were and he was informed that they will begin in April.

VI. Old Business

- Special Occasion Event Legislation – Mr. Villinger informed the Board that the Special Occasion Events Bill was signed by the governor and is now a law. This law is for all preserved farms and the SADC will be providing a template for applications to the CADBs. They will also be providing guidance on how CADBs should deal with this new law. Mr. Villinger informed the Board that they do not need to take any action at the moment, but suggested going through the Special Occasion Events Summary that was provided to them by staff.

Mr. Villinger read the Special Occasion Events Summary to the Board to go over details of the new law. The Board was informed that the big change in the final version of the law was that special occasion event restrictions do not apply to exception areas.

Mr. Lynch questioned if off-site parking is acceptable for Special Occasion Events and he was informed that it is because it takes place off the premises of a preserved farm. The occupied area associated with a Special Occasion Event has to be no more than the lesser of 10 acres or 10% of the preserved farmland and parking is included.

Keeping track of how many events happen such as weddings is going to be the hardest challenge for the Board as weddings count as a Special Occasion Event. Preserved farms can hold On-farm Direct Marketing Events and they will not count.

Mr. Villinger informed the Board that it is their job to determine if a preserved farm is in agreement with their deed of easement. A municipality has the option to require an application, charge an application fee, and disapprove these events from happening. A commercial farm may hold twenty-six (26) special occasion events each calendar year, of which only six (6) special occasion events may have 250 guests or more in attendance at any time during the event.

Mr. Villinger informed the Board that applications for special occasion events have to come through them and they are in charge of granting approval. Approval has to come in writing from the Board prior to holding special occasion events. Staff and the Board will have to develop an application that preserved farm owners can use to apply for special occasion events. The application shall determine:

- The commercial farm located on the preserved farmland produces agricultural or horticultural products worth \$10,000 or more annually.
- The number of Special Occasion Events being held during the calendar year.
- The maximum attendance of the Special Occasion Events.
- The acreage of the occupied area being used for the Special Occasion Event.
- Whether the farm is in compliance with its farmland preservation deed of easement.
- The grantee (CADB) has 90 days to respond or it is deemed approved.

Mr. Villinger informed the Board the grantee and the committee shall have the right, without advance notice, to inspect a preserved farm on which special occasion events are held, upon presentation of appropriate credentials, in order to determine compliance. A permittee conducting special occasion events shall not be subjected to an inspection more than once per year without good cause demonstrated by the grantee or committee. There are penalties that follow each violation.

Mr. Yergeau questioned with the law going into effect immediately if there is a grace period for the farms so they can put together what special occasion events they are holding this calendar year. Mr. Villinger stated that the Secretary of Agriculture put out a reminder that the special occasion event pilot ended and farms should not have any special occasion events scheduled. Preserved farms need to be notified that this law is now in effect and no special occasion events should be held without it coming to the Board first. This is now a problem as the SADC has not given guidance on the application process yet.

VII. Public Comment

Mr. Thompson encouraged opening up the meeting to Public Comment before Closed Session. There was no public comment.

Mr. Vogel stepped out for Closed Session.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Lynch to move into Closed Session at 7:56 p.m. Ms. Sucharski seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Lynch to move back into Open Session at 8:08 p.m. Ms. Sucharski seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

There will be no action taken on the single farm application that was discussed in closed session.

VIII. Adjournment

A **MOTION** to adjourn at 8:09 pm was made by Ms. Sucharski and seconded by Mr. Lynch. All in favor, motion passed.

**Next Meeting: March 8, 2023 at 7PM
Manchester Council Meeting Room, Manchester Township**

Respectfully Submitted,



Tim Gleason
Planner Trainee