

**Ocean County Agricultural Development Board
Minutes of December 14, 2022
Manchester Courtroom, Manchester Township**

Attendance: Doug Hallock, Chairman; Casey Hunter, Vice Chair; Martin Lynch (OCADB); Kathleen Sucharski (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: Robert Bowen (Mayor of Plumsted), Diane Vogel

I. Flag Salute

II. Call to order and Compliance with Open Public Meetings Act- Doug Hallock (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. Hunter to approve the October 12, 2022 minutes. Ms. Sucharski seconded. Roll Call. All in favor, motion carried.

V. Program Updates

- 58 Farms/3,446.21 acres preserved – Mr. Villinger informed the Board that they had received an updated chart of all the preserved farms as it has been some time since the last time they went over this. The Huie Farm is the latest farm to be preserved under new acquisitions.
- NYC Farmers Market Grant – Mr. Villinger informed the Board that staff had been notified about this grant from the Harvest Home Farmers Market. They are a nonprofit based in New York City that are providing stipends to farmers to help with costs of getting produce to the city. This is being used to accommodate lower income neighborhoods. The Board is informed to share this with anyone they think might be interested.

VI. New Business

- Farmland Applications, Plumsted Township
 1. Filippone Farm – Mr. Villinger informed the Board that the same landowner, Mr. Lanuto, came before the Board for the SSAMP request involving the on-farm brewery. Now that the SSAMP has been completed, an application has been submitted for farmland preservation. The farm is 13.31 acres and consists of barley, hops, and fruit crops. There is also horses, chickens, and goats found on the farm. The applicant is requesting a 1.5 acre non-severable exception around the existing detached pole barn and existing house. The net acreage would total 11.81 acres of easement area and their total tillable acres is just about 7.5 acres. This brings the property to 57% tillable and the requirement is a minimum of 50%.

Mr. Thorsen informed the Board that the farm got a 37 out of 100 in the ranking system mostly due to the fact that it is not completely surrounded by preserved farms and it does not fully contain prime soils.

Mr. Hallock questioned how close a farm needs to be to other preserved farms because the Grant Farm is preserved and in close proximity.

Mr. Villinger informed that the ranking criteria gives points if the farm is within a certain proximity to other preserved farms. A farm will receive less points if it is adjacent to roads, residential neighborhoods, or nonagricultural developments. Mr. Villinger then informed the Board that since they have certified the property as a commercial farm they can choose if a site inspection is needed. The Board agreed a new site inspection was not needed at this time. Staff can complete mapping and review of all material to send to the State for Green Light Approval so the County can get State funding for it.

Mr. Hallock questioned if the State does not choose to provide funding can the County preserve it on its own. Mr. Villinger stated that the County could choose to do this.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Hunter to submit the Filippone Farm application for SADC greenlight review. Ms. Sucharski seconded. Roll Call. All in favor, motion carried.

2. Krowicki II – Mr. Villinger informed the Board that they have seen this application before as the landowner declined an offer of certified market value in 2014. The property consists of two lots which total 11.21 acres and it is on the corner of Buckalew Lane and Route 539. Tillable acres on the property is about 9 acres which brings it to right around 75% tillable. The landowner is not requesting any exceptions areas as they would like to put an easement over the entire property. This piece of property connects to the main Krowicki farm. The Board agreed a site inspection was not needed at this time.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Hunter to submit the Krowicki II application for SADC greenlight review. Mr. Lynch seconded. Roll Call. All in favor, motion carried.

- Assembly Bill A4729 – Mr. Villinger informed the Board that Assemblyman Sauickie sent a letter addressed to Mr. Hallock requesting the CADB to review the legislation and if they agreed then respond with a resolution of support. The Bill would provide an alternative funding formula for farmland preservation. It would not get rid of the current appraisal process, but it would create a second method of getting towards farmland preservation while potentially offering more value to the farmer. The formula would use physical characteristics such as soil quality, road frontage, proximity to other preserved farms, percent of tillable acreage, etc. This is similar to the County's ranking sheet and offers another option to the SADC or CADBs for farmland preservation.

Mr. Villinger informed the Board that the State uses a similar method for farmland preservation within the Pinelands. Mr. Hallock stated that the letter he received had Burlington County approving the Bill and Mr. Villinger confirmed that Burlington had signed a resolution of support. Mr. Hunter questioned if ultimately appraisals rule and he was informed that they don't as this would provide another way to value a farm. If appraisals come in at a low amount then this new method may help raise the value. The goal behind this is that the best farm gets preserved rather than just the highest value farm. Mr. Lynch stated that this new method is going to drive up the costs of appraisals. Mr. Hallock questioned if the Board had to take action and he is informed that they do not, but the Assemblyman requested to review and sign a resolution of support if agreeable. The Board may wait until next months meeting to take action, but Mr. Hunter believed supporting the Bill would be the only way to encourage more preservation within the program. Mr. Hallock requested a resolution be read for the record and Mr. Gleason read the resolution of support to the Board to go over the details.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Lynch for the OCADB to support Asembly Bill A4729. Ms. Sucharski seconded. Roll Call. All in favor, motion carried.

- 2023 Meeting Schedule – Mr. Villinger informed the Board that the 2023 schedule should basically reflect the 2022 schedule. Meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month. January, February, and March meetings will be held in Manchester, April through September will be held in Plumsted, and October and December will be back in Manchester. There will be no November meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Hunter to adopt the 2023 meeting schedule. Ms. Sucharski seconded. Roll Call. All in favor, motion carried.

VII. Public Comment

Mr. Hallock opened the meeting to the public. There was no public comment.

VIII. Adjournment

A **MOTION** to adjourn at 7:31 pm was made by Mr. Hunter and seconded by Mr. Lynch. All in favor, motion passed.

**Next Meeting: January 11, 2023 at 7PM
Manchester Council Meeting Room, Manchester Township**

Respectfully Submitted,



Tim Gleason
Planner Trainee