

**Millstone Township
Agricultural Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2007**

Chairman Romano called the meeting to order at 7:20 PM.

The Secretary read the adequate notice.

Roll Call:

Present – Ms. Butch, Mr. Halka, Ms. Pinhas, Mr. Romano

Absent - Mr. Wilson

Approval of September 10, 2007, minutes was postponed until the January meeting.

Motion was made by Ms. Pinhas to approve the November 5th meeting minutes with a Second offered by Ms. Butch and all in favor.

Old Business

➤ **Correspondence**

- **SADC Subdivision Denial Resolution dated 11/5/07** - The resolution was distributed for review; the Council discussed the difficulty of dividing a preserved property.
- **SADC Policy-49: Placement of Septic Systems to Service Structures on Exception Areas** – Ms. Butch provided a brief synopsis of the policy to the council; the policy will be posted on the Township website.

- **Open Farm Market** – Ms. Pinhas provided a list of preliminary survey questions to farmers including: if there is interest in participating in the produce market; which day of the week and what time would be preferable; location preference; if the variety of produce/products should be limited; and if non-local farmers should be permitted to participate. It was agreed that non-local farmers should be included in the market to provide a wider variety of items. Preference will be given to local farmers to provide locally grown produce and non-local vendors will be able to provide items such as bread, cheese and meats. There was a discussion regarding charging non-local farmers a fee since there will be a cost incurred for cleanup. Mr. Romano suggested including questions on the survey asking farmers if they will require any utilities, equipment or supplies and what products they would sell. Ms. Pinhas will prepare a survey and send via email to the Council for review.

➤ **Farm Lease**

- **Lee Farm** – Mr. J. Lenhardt currently has a bridge lease with Mr. Lee and has planted a cover crop which will be harvested by July 2008; when the Township takes ownership of the property, the farm will go through the bid process; the Council will need to assist the Township Committee with structuring a farm lease; using the county lease as a basis for a municipal lease was discussed; lease packages will probably go out by the end of March 2008; this topic will be re-visited.
- **Monmouth County Farm Lease process** – Mr. Romano is preparing a second letter to the County; the County responded to the initial letter from the Council stating that the bid process is announced in the newspaper and

that it is the responsibility of the farmer to initiate the call to the County to request a lease package; The second letter will address two issues: that the bid process was not handled in a fair manner; and that one local farmer sent a written request and received a written response from the County stating that he would receive a lease package when available however this farmer did not receive any information regarding the bidding process. Ms. Butch had contacted the County to request bid information so that it could be posted on the Township website; she was told that the bidding process would take place in October however the process occurred in August which was earlier than anticipated. The Council expressed concern that local farmers were taken out of the bid process due to the way the bidding was handled by the County. Council members offered suggestions for distributing bid information in a fair and equitable manner including the creation of a County farm lease mailing list and requesting that the County notify municipal Ag Councils so that information can be appropriately disseminated to local farmers.

- **Resolution Supporting Installation of Vide Lottery Terminals at the Racetracks in New Jersey** – The County has requested a copy of the resolution indicating that the Freeholders may be voting on this issue as well; the Township has received recognition for support of the industry; both Ms. Grbelja and Mr. Abilheira were invited to attend a Breeder’s Cup event; Ms. Grbelja attended and was thanked for her support of the industry.
- **Outstanding Young Farmer Nominations** – To date, the Council has received one nomination: Jonathan Pinhas; the Council discussed other eligible farmers and that while many young farmers may be reluctant to participate, the competition provides good experience and that it may take three or four years of competition before a participant wins.
- **OEM Large Animal Action Plan** – Ms. Pinhas completed her review of the OEM manual and noted that the only mention of animals is that they are not permitted in shelters; the Council noted that an animal emergency action plan should be a goal for 2008; Ms. Butch suggested either inviting Mr. Lester Jargowsky, the Monmouth County OEM Coordinator, to attend an Ag Council meeting or requesting to get on the County OEM agenda in either January or February 2008 to discuss an action plan. The Secretary will contact Mr. Jargowsky.
- **Review November 8th Right to Farm Seminar** – The presentation was weak and the speaker, while knowledgeable, stumbled with questions from the audience. There were approximately 25 people in attendance at the seminar, many of whom had also attended the Farmland Assessment seminar demonstrating that residents acknowledge that the Ag Council is providing helpful and useful information to residents.
- **Farm Conservation Plan Seminar** – will be held on December 13th at the Community Center; the Secretary will send an email to the Ag Council mailing list to remind them about the upcoming seminar; this seminar will inform farmers about free services available to help make farms more productive.

- **Clambake** – Mr. Cory Wingerter will be chairing the event and is in the process of setting a date of either June 1st or June 8th at the Clarksburg Inn. Suggestions for the event include providing indoor and outdoor seating and setting two separate ticketed time frames to avoid overcrowding; another suggestion is to get more volunteers to help at the event.
- **Review Municipal Farmland Plan** – the Township Committee will vote on acceptance of the Plan at the December 5th meeting; Ms. Pinhas attended the November 29th OSFP Council meeting to vote to accept the Plan; Ms Butch also voted as an Ag Council member to accept the Plan and submitted Mr. Romano's vote of acceptance, which had been provided via phone. The Ag Council vote needed to be submitted prior to the December 3rd meeting because there would not have been sufficient time to send the Plan to print. The OSFP Council also voted to accept the Plan at the 11/29/07 meeting with all members in favor. Upon acceptance of the OSFP and Ag Councils and the Township Committee, the Plan will be sent to the SADC and the County and will be posted to the Township website for public review and comment.

New Business

- **Appointments & Re-appointments** – The Council discussed a replacement for Gary Wilson; the Secretary will check with the clerk for any talent bank applications on hand for the Ag Council. Talent bank forms will be also be distributed at the December 13th seminar. Mr. Halka nominated Mr. Romano for Chairman and Ms. Pinhas as Vice-chair; both accepted the nomination with voting to take place at the January meeting. Mr. Halka announced that he is unable to attend the January and February meetings and will submit his vote for officers prior to January 2, 2008.
- **2007 Annual Report** – The Council bylaws state that an annual report of activities and operations must be provided to the Township Committee; Mr. Romano will initiate the list and the Secretary will compile information from each month's posted meeting minutes. The Secretary will put the list on letterhead for submission to the Township Committee.

Next Meeting

January 7, 2008

At 9:17 PM a Motion was made by Ms. Pinhas with a Second offered by Ms. Butch and by unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 9:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorraine Maher