

# Millstone Township Agricultural Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes  
February 1, 2010

Ms. Pinhas called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

The Secretary read the adequate notice.

## Roll Call

Present: (6) Asprocolas, Butch, Dancer, Halka, Peck, Pinhas

Absent: (0)

In attendance: Mayor Grbelja

## Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Asprocolas with a second offered by Ms. Butch to approve the December 7, 2009, meeting minutes with all in favor.

A motion was made by Mr. Dancer with a second offered by Mr. Asprocolas to approve the January 11, 2010, meeting minutes with all in favor.

## Reorganization - Election of Officers

- Ms. Butch nominated Mr. Halka for Chairman with a second offered by Ms. Pinhas. Mr. Halka accepted the nomination. Roll Call vote:
  - Ayes (5) Butch, Pinhas, Asprocolas, Dancer, Halka
  - Nays (0)
- Ms. Butch nominated Mr. Asprocolas for Vice Chairman with a second offered by Mr. Halka. Mr. Asprocolas accepted the nomination. Roll Call vote:
  - Ayes (5) Butch, Halka, Asprocolas, Dancer, Pinhas
  - Nays (0)

## Correspondence

- USDA Farm Service Agency Newsletter dated 1/12/10; the newsletter was distributed for review and has been posted on the Ag Council website.
- M/Grbelja announced that Governor Christie contacted all mayors requesting input on 19 reports, one of which is a report on the Department of Agriculture; if Council members read the reports and have comments, M/Grbelja offered to forward the comments to Governor Christie; there are links to the Dept of Ag, DEP and the Authorities Transition reports on the Farm Bureau website.

## Old Business

- **Farm Market**
  - *Location*
    - Red Wagon: Ms. Butch will contact the owner regarding the lease term and availability of the stand area; a portable bathroom facility would be required; this would be a potential site for the 2011 season.

- Van Handle's: Mr. Asprocolas explained that the size might not be adequate for a community market with more than one or two vendors.
  - Brandywine Soccer Fields: There are deed restrictions on the fields but it may be possible to use the parking area; Mr. Asprocolas felt that the soccer fields would have the same visibility issues as Wagner Farm Park.
  - Municipal Building on Stage Coach Road: After discussing various potential locations, Council members agreed that the municipal parking lot on Stage Coach Road would be the best location for the 2010 season because it is a centralized location; a sign advertising the market should be posted during the week, not just when the market is open; it may also be possible to have an overhead banner; M/Grbelja asked the Council to put a request in writing to the Township Committee.
  - *Opening date and operating hours:* Mr. Asprocolas suggested opening the market in May for bedding plants and holding a grand opening in June when more produce is available; the operating hours will be on Saturdays from 9:00 am through either 1:00 pm or 3:00 pm.
  - *Produce:* originally vendors were limited to selling Jersey Fresh produce; at the end of last year's season the market was opened to produce that is not grown in New Jersey such as citrus fruits and bananas; demand at the market was higher for Jersey produce than for produce that is not grown in New Jersey.
  - *Baked goods:* Mr. Asprocolas provided information about wholesale frozen pies that he obtained from the Vegetable Growers Convention; the pies could be sold frozen or baked in a commercial kitchen and sold.
- **Former Lee Property Farm Lease**
- Bid packages are available from Municipal Clerk, Maria Dellasala.
  - Ms. Pinhas stepped down as a member of the Ag Council for this portion of the meeting because her son, Jonathan Pinhas, intends to bid on the lease.
  - Mr. Pinhas asked the Council to clarify the term "specified crops"; Ms. Butch responded that while the lease does not list specific crops, it must be a crop that does not require irrigation, requires fertilization and must be planted in accordance with USDA Crop Insurance Plant-by Dates; there are ramifications if lease terms are not met, including termination of the lease; insurance and legal questions are being addressed by Ms. Dellasala and attorney Simon Kaufman; the 72 hour notification requirement for spraying was discussed and clarified; once the farmer determines which crop will be planted, the farmer should have an idea of what the spray schedule will be; the type of pesticide license required is being researched by Ms. Dellasala and will be clarified; the lessee is responsible for mowing the thirty-foot right-of-way around the perimeter of each leased area three times per year.

- The lease payment schedule was discussed; currently one third of the payment is due within 30 days of lease execution; one third is due by April 1, 2011 and the final third is due April 1, 2012; under this arrangement two thirds of the lease payment is due prior to harvesting the first crop; the Council discussed alternate payment schedules and will make a recommendation to the Township Committee to adjust the payment schedule so that 10% of the lease amount will be submitted with the bid package, 45% will be due December 1, 2011, and the final 45% will be due December 1, 2012.
- M/Grbelja will speak to Ms. Dellasala regarding the additional legal sections of the lease package.
- Ms. Butch noted that the entire farm lease bid process has been an open process in which farmers and residents have been afforded the opportunity to provide input at a variety of Township Committee and Ag Council open public meetings.
- M/Grbelja noted that the lease has been prepared to be fair and to protect the Township.
- **Large Animal OEM Plan**
  - Ms. Butch has completed County Emergency Response Training (CERT) requirements and is now certified; the next step is to contact and meet with groups that will be partners in the OEM Plan; the Red Cross does not want to be involved with animals; the Salvation Army and the Humane Society are willing partners; an OEM plan for the Township will need to be written; Ms. Butch will check to see if the OEM plan is an open public document.
- **Animal Waste Management Plan (AWMP)**
  - Seminars are still being held; there is a link on the Ag Council website to the seminar schedule.
- **New Jersey Vegetable Growers Convention**
  - Ms. Pinhas presented a variety of information obtained at the convention.
  - The Secretary will make copies of the "Common Motor Vehicle Statues and Regulation Impacting Farmers" handout from the New Jersey Farm Bureau for the municipal building State Police office.
- **Outstanding Young Farmer**
  - The deadline was January 15<sup>th</sup>; there were no nominations presented to the Ag Council.
- **2010 New Jersey State Agriculture Convention**
  - Will be held on February 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> at the East Brunswick Hilton; Mr. Asprocolas will be attending the convention.

## **New Business**

- **Lame Duck Legislation**

- The Forest Stewardship Act was signed by former Governor Corzine on his last day in office; previously, reduced property tax assessments were only available if landowners cut down trees; this new bill provides reduced property tax assessments to landowners who actively manage woodlands to improve their health and sustainability.
- The Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Bill was signed but will not be implemented until the DEP designates three state-owned sites where ORVs may be ridden.
- The proposed bill would have expanded the scope of current legislation regarding the 25 mph speed restriction when approaching or passing horseback riders to include ponies and mules as well as persons leading or driving horses, ponies or mules; the bill was not signed.

**Next Meeting**

- The next Ag Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 1, 2010.

Having no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Pinhas with a second offered by Mr. Dancer to adjourn the meeting and by unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorraine Maher