

# Millstone Township Agricultural Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

March 3, 2014

Mr. Asprocolas called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm.

The Secretary read the adequate notice.

## Roll Call

Present: (5) Asprocolas, Butch, Dancer, Peck, Posten (7:35 pm)

Absent: (1) Pinhas

## Approval of Minutes

A Motion was made by Ms. Butch with a Second offered by Mr. Peck to approve the January 13, 2014, minutes.

AYES: (4) Butch, Peck, Asprocolas, Dancer

NAYS: (0)

ABSTAIN: (0)

**Public Comment:** No public in attendance.

## Correspondence

- The **18<sup>th</sup> Annual NJ Land Conservation Rally** will take place on Saturday, March 22, at Rutgers University in Piscataway. Ms. Butch discussed Ordinance No. 14-02, which amends the powers and duties of the Ag Council. The ordinance had its first reading on February 19<sup>th</sup> with the second reading scheduled for March 19<sup>th</sup>. Upon adoption of the ordinance, the Ag Council will be the body that handles farmland preservation applications. Ms. Butch explained that the land rally is a good opportunity for Council members to learn about the farmland preservation program and suggested that Council members attend. Going forward, the Ag Council will be responsible for taking farmland preservation applications, performing site assessments, prioritizing applications, making recommendations to the Township Committee and sending applications to the County or State for processing. Upon "green light approval" from the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), the Council will be responsible for ordering appraisals and surveys. The goal of the farmland preservation program is to keep the best farmland in farming. The program places an easement on the land however the land remains privately owned. Ms. Butch has been handling the process since 2003 and is looking for someone to work alongside her and learn the process. Ms. Butch has worked with the County, nonprofit groups and the SADC and has sat down with many landowners to answer questions about the program and the preservation process. Additionally, Ms. Butch has attended SADC meetings to help move applications forward that have been stalled in the SADC process.
- **SADC Newsletter**, February 2014: The newsletter was distributed for Council review.

## Old Business

- **Large Animal OEM Plan:** A workshop for handling large animals is scheduled for April at the Horse Park.
- **Farm Leases:** A letter regarding the status of the Lichtman Management and Use Agreement and the farm lease was sent to the NJ DEP in January. A response has not been received to date and Ms. Butch will follow up with Mr. Porutski.
- **Horse Keeping Businesses and New Jersey Sales and Use Tax:** Nothing new to report.
- **Baird Homestead Project:** Nothing new to report.

- **Commercial Farm Certification Form:** The form has been updated for 2014 to change the Mayor's name to Bob Kinsey. Millstone is one of the first towns to use the form which is modeled after Monmouth County's form. The Township Committee has the authority to question applications and request supporting documentation. Commercial farms are protected under the Right to Farm Act and are exempt from many of Millstone's ordinances.
- **New Jersey Farm Bureau Membership:** The Ag Council has sent in a membership form for an Associate Membership. Council members discussed the possibility of posting information about Farm Bureau membership on the PEG channel.
- **Farmland Preservation Process:** Discussed under Correspondence.
- **State Agriculture Convention:** Ms. Butch explained that delegates did not see resolutions prior to the convention which made it very difficult to read through and offer amendments to resolutions prior to voting. Delegates requested that, going forward, resolutions be mailed out at least two weeks prior to the convention so that they have an opportunity to thoroughly review them and are prepared to vote at the convention.
- **New Jersey Vegetable Growers Convention:** Mr. Asprocolas explained that the convention was good with educational sessions well attended but the trade show was poorly attended due to the weather. Mr. Asprocolas attended a workshop on mandatory GMO labeling, which was a hot topic at the convention.
- **Young Farmers & Ranchers Program:** This is a newly reestablished program of the New Jersey Farm Bureau. Members must be between the ages of 18 and 35. Stuart Faunce is the Monmouth County delegate and Ms. Posten is the alternate to the committee.
- **Right to Farm Complaint:** Council members discussed recent Asbury Park Press articles about the farm on Stillhouse Road. A right-to-farm complaint was submitted by the Township to the MCADB in 2013. The MCADB determined that the farm does not meet the criteria for a commercial farm and therefore did not qualify for protection under the Right to Farm Act. The State veterinarian visited the farm twice. The report indicated the animals were in acceptable condition but the farm lacked a manure management plan, which was turned over to the NJ DEP. The SPCA has jurisdiction because this is not a commercial farm.

#### **New Business**

- **Ordinance No. 14-02:** Discussed under Correspondence.
- **8<sup>th</sup> Annual Clambake Fundraiser:** A request has been submitted to the Recreation Commission to schedule the Wagner Farm Park facility for Sunday, June 8<sup>th</sup>.
- **Board of Managers:** The annual report was approved at the last Board of Managers meeting. Ms. Butch will share the report with the Council at the April Ag Council meeting.

Having no further business to discuss, a Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Dancer with a Second offered by Ms. Butch and by unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorraine Maher  
Council Secretary