

Millstone Township Agricultural Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes
July 7, 2014

Mr. Peck called the meeting to order at 7:50 pm.

The Secretary read the adequate notice.

Roll Call

Present: (3) Butch, Peck, Pinhas

Absent: (3) Asprocolas, Dancer, Posten

Approval of Minutes

A Motion was made by Ms. Butch with a Second offered by Mr. Peck to approve the April 7, 2014, minutes.

AYES: (3) Butch, Peck, Pinhas

NAYS: (0)

ABSTAIN: (0)

Public Comment: No public in attendance.

Correspondence

- The **2015 Farmland Assessment Applications** have been mailed. The mailing included a letter from the Tax Assessor explaining the documents required for filing along with information regarding changes to Farmland Assessment that will take effect in 2015. Council members discussed sponsoring an educational seminar to address the changes to farmland assessment. A suggestion was made to request a speaker from the Department of Agriculture. The best time to hold the seminar would be in winter after the growing season is over.

Old Business

- **Large Animal OEM Plan:** Ms. Butch and Ms. Romano compiled a list of supplies that would be needed to operate for one day in an emergency situation. The estimated cost of the supplies is under \$1,000 for cages, leashes, bowls, etc. Ms. Butch and Ms. Romano are waiting for approval to order the supplies as well as a hold harmless agreement that would be required in the event of an emergency.
- **Farm Leases:** A letter and follow-up email have been sent to Mr. Porutski regarding the status of the Management and Use Agreement and the farm lease for the Lichtman property. There are two farm fields that total approximately 16 acres. Both farm fields have trails around the perimeter. The Secretary will make arrangements to meet with Mr. Porutski and Ms. Butch to discuss the status of the Management and Use Agreement and the farm lease.
- **Horse Keeping Businesses and New Jersey Sales and Use Tax:** The Farm Bureau is advocating for legislation to clarify the tax. Legislation introduced by Assemblyman Dancer has not been voted on yet.
- **Baird Homestead Project:** Ms. Butch explained that it is necessary for the *Friends of Millstone Township Historic Registered Properties* to hold a fundraiser to pay monthly utility bills, assist with development project expenses and fund educational programs at the Baird Homestead. Ms. Butch presented information to the school board on Monday, June 30th, regarding potential educational programs to be conducted at the Baird Homestead. The presentation was well received and Ms. Butch, with the education committee, will be meeting with the new curriculum director, Karen Barry, to plan the next actions to 1) gain teacher buy-in, 2) determine lesson connections with curriculum at each grade level. The pollinator

program, school garden and science units will be explored. Council members discussed the possibility of having a school garden at the Baird Homestead which is across the street from the Middle School. A safe street crossing with a flashing light will be explored. If the school decides that the garden will be located on school property, the plants could be started in the greenhouse at the Baird Homestead.

Council members also discussed FFA involvement in the programs at the Baird Homestead.

Ms. Butch asked if the Ag Council would be willing to co-sponsor a fundraising event with the *Friends* group and the Historical Commission with the understanding that all proceeds from the event would go for the Baird Homestead project to defray monthly property expenses and to pay for educational activities and programs. Ms. Butch spoke with Mr. Asprocolas and Mr. Dancer today and they are both in support of co-sponsoring the fundraiser. Ms. Butch also spoke with Committeewoman Grbelja who did not see any reason why the Ag Council couldn't co-sponsor the fundraiser. Ms. Pinhas made a Motion to have the Ag Council support and co-sponsor a fall harvest festival fundraiser with all proceeds going to support the Baird Homestead project. A Second was offered by Ms. Butch. Roll call vote:

AYES: (3) Pinhas, Butch, Peck
NAYS: (0)
ABSTAIN: (0)

The *Friends* group will submit a letter to the Township Committee to request use of the Wagner Farm Park facility on Saturday, October 25th, for a fall harvest festival. Ms. Butch spoke with the Health Inspector regarding the preparation and serving of food at the event and is looking into procedures for having a beer garden or wine tasting at the event. Ms. Butch did some research and surrounding towns are holding these types of events on Green Acres properties. Activities that are in the planning phase for the event include a house tour, petting zoo, wool demonstration and face painting. Additional activities will be added to the list when they are "owned" by a volunteer who will see the activity through from beginning to end. Council members should email ideas for activities to Ms. Butch.

- **Farmland Preservation Process:** There is State funding available to Millstone Township to preserve one more farm of approximately 40 acres.
- **New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Board of Managers Nomination Process:** A listening session meeting is scheduled for July 17th in Bordentown and will provide an opportunity for the farming industry and the Board of Governors to engage in an open dialogue about the nomination process and the governance of the NJAES.
- **Agricultural Tourism Activities and Events (S-837 and A-1272):** The legislation regarding special events on farms is currently on the Governor's desk.
- **Clambake Fundraiser Review**
 - Sponsorships & Ticket Sales \$11,706.00
 - Expenses \$3,280.03
 - Net Income \$8,425.97

Events

- **Millstone Day** will be held on Sunday, September 21st, at Frogbridge Day Camp. Ms. Butch completed the registration form for the Ag Council along with the registration forms for other related groups including the Open Space Council, the Historic Commission, Trailblazers and the *Friends* group. The forms will be submitted to the Recreation Department with a cover letter to request taht the related groups to be placed together in a horseshoe formation.

New Business

- **Newsletter:** The Ag Council splits the cost of the newsletter with the Open Space Council. Ms. Butch and the Secretary will be putting the newsletter together over the summer. Articles will include the Baird property closing, the Trapani Farm and open space funding. The publication date has not been set but will be in the fall.

Having no executive session business to discuss, Ms. Butch made a Motion with a Second offered by Mr. Peck to approve the April 7, 2014, executive session meeting minutes. Roll call vote:

AYES: (3) Butch, Peck, Pinhas

NAYS: (0)

ABSTAIN: (0)

At 8:37 pm, having no further business to discuss, a Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Pinhas with a Second offered by Ms. Butch and by unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorraine Maher
Council Secretary