

**MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
December 21, 2021
MEETING MINUTES**

Chairperson Butch called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

Chairperson Butch read the adequate notice.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Ms. Butch, Ms. Butewicz, Mr. Peck,
Deputy Mayor Grbelja, Township Committee Liaison

ABSENT: Ms. Posten, Mr. Asprocolas

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: OCTOBER 26, 2021

Vice Chairperson Butewicz made the motion to approve the October 26, 2021 minutes and Councilperson Peck offered a second.

Chairperson Butch offered 2 minor verbiage changes to the minutes. Ms. Butewicz and Mr. Peck amended their motion to include the changes.

Roll call to approve minutes: Butch, Butewicz, and Peck voted in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Peck motioned to open the floor for public comments at 7:35. Ms. Butewicz offered a second. Seeing no public in attendance, Ms. Butewicz motioned to close the floor for public comments. Mr. Peck offered a second. Closed at 7:35pm

CORRESPONDENCE:

No correspondence.

OLD BUSINESS:

Newsletter: The newsletter will be moved to early 2022.

NEW BUSINESS:

Meeting Dates: The organizational meeting will be moved to January 18, 2022 in order to have a joint meeting with the Monmouth County Agriculture Board and take advantage of the presentation by Dave Specca on Agrivoltaics. The meeting dates for 2022 were reviewed and will be presented in January for approval.

NJ Farm Bureau: Chairperson Butch noted the 10 top Agricultural policy concerns ranked recently by the delegates. 1.Farming Viability 2.Wildlife Management 3.Right to Farm 4.Minimum Wage & Labor Supply 5.Livestock Industry Support 6.Agriculture Retention and Farmland Preservation 7.Soil Disruption 8.Threats by Invasive Species 9.NJAES and Commitment to Production Agriculture 10.Fire and Building Code regulations

Vegetable Growers Convention: The convention is coming up in February. Members will be attending.

Animal Waste Management: There are some farms with livestock that are unaware of the requirements that need to be met to be compliant with animal waste management plans. Chairperson Butch will look at getting someone to make a presentation on the subject at the February or March meeting. A mailing list will be updated using the latest farmland assessment lists for the Township.

Gaitway Farms: A discussion ensued regarding the Redevelopment Plan presented by the Manalapan Township Committee that is targeting the area that includes Gaitway Farms. There are already plans for putting warehouses on the property. Gaitway Farms is the premier training center for standardbred racing in NJ. If the property is sold and turned into warehouses, it will have a detrimental impact on the Equine Industry in central NJ. Most of the trainers and horse owners at Gaitway were unaware of the upcoming vote by the Manalapan TC. This will have a negative impact on the many families in the surrounding towns that are tied to the horse industry. There are close to 600 horses and 45 trainers that depend on Gaitway. If it closes, many will have to move out of state for equivalent facilities. The horse tracks at Gaitway are some of the best in NJ for training standardbred racing horses. Hay growers in the area will also be affected. A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Butewicz to direct Chairperson Butch to email the Millstone TC to request their representation at the Manalapan meeting to address the potential loss to the equine industry if the plan is adopted. Chairperson Butch offered a second. All voted in favor.

PENDING LEGISLATION:

Township Committee Liaison Grbelja noted that 2 bills recently passed the assembly. One required live racing in order to permit sports betting. The second put back 5 million dollars back into the purses for horse racing that was previously held back due to Covid. Chairperson Butch noted that funding for Farmland Preservation/Open Space and Historic Properties was approved. She also noted that the definition for Locally Grown was expanded to require a product to be grown, harvested and packed in NJ to meet the definition. The bipartisan infrastructure bill was also passed that will help improve roadways and transportation infrastructure in NJ.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Ms. Butewicz made a motion to adjourn the regular session and enter into the Executive Session. Mr. Peck offered a Second and the Council unanimously moved to executive session at 8:24 p.m. The Council returned from Executive Session at 8:32pm.

A discussion regarding property on Stillhouse road that is stocking wood chips and fill dirt on farm assessed property was held. Vice Chairperson Butewicz made a motion to direct Chairperson Butch to send an email to the Township requesting more information. Councilperson Peck offered a second. All were in favor.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilperson Peck motioned to adjourn. Chairperson Butch offered a second. Meeting adjourned at 8:38pm.