

**MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 14, 2023**

Ms. Butewicz called the Meeting to Order at 2:01 p.m.

Adequate Notice read at 2:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mr. Asprocolas, Ms. Butch, Ms. Butewicz, Mr. Peck, Ms. Posten

Absent: Deputy Mayor Morris

Township Administrator Abernethy attended the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No Public Open & Closed at 2:05 PM

MEETING MINUTES:

January 24, 2023 Minutes - Councilperson Butch made a motion to approve the minutes with amendments. Chairperson Butewics offered a second.

Roll Call: Asprocolas, Butch and Butewicz voted in favor

CORRESPONDENCE: None

OLD BUSINESS:

Newsletter: The newsletter will feature the history and installation of the windmill at the Baird Homestead. It should cover 2 pages between the article and pictures. The back page will promote the Clambake scheduled for Sunday, June 4th. Ms. Butewicz will write the letter from the chair and an article about backyard chickens and eggs. Ms. Butch suggested information about the Avian Flu. She will speak with Mr. Blackwell about the article on the windmill. Articles should be submitted by the end of March.

Municipal Labor Housing Ordinance: In discussions with the Township, there are some criteria that should be met for permitting agricultural labor housing in Millstone Township.

1. Minimum acreage requirement
2. Production Agriculture minimum gross income amount
3. Easement recorded in the deed to prevent housing from becoming rental in the future.
4. Application qualifying proper use

Mr. Abernethy suggested that the acreage requirement should exceed 10 acres. Mr. Asprocolas noted that with high tunnel agriculture, farms under 10 acres could still require labor housing. Mr. Peck suggested using income to justify housing either per employee housed or per housing unit. Ms. Posten noted that labor can be full time, part time or H2A. Housing would need to accommodate various employment periods/needs.

Discussion continued on how to balance the need for requirements that benefit both production agriculture and equine needs while preventing abuse that would create rental units that are not used for the proper purposes.

The council will work on an application that farmers would submit to the Ag Council for review and approval before it is forwarded to the Township for approval and permitting.

NJ Ag Convention: Ms. Butch provided a list of topics that were discussed at the recent convention. The DEP gave a presentation regarding the revamping of the well program and licensing procedures for various wells.

There was a resolution on soil protection that would require conservation practices to be implemented when a certain level of impervious coverage is attained on a farm.

Other issues that were discussed were farm viability, equine and livestock veterinarian shortages, revamping of the farmland preservation rules.

Mr. Asprocolas and Mr. Peck discussed the issues with the NJ WIC Supplemental Nutrition program. Mr. Abernethy suggested having a link on the Township website where farmers can list produce available for purchase to allow residents to buy directly from local farms.

NEW BUSINESS:

Special Occasions Events bill: This bill permits up to 26 events on preserved farms to help generate additional revenue. Ms. Butch noted that events for 501C(3) organizations do not count toward the 26 event limit.

Chairperson Butewicz moved to go to executive session. Councilperson Butch offered a second.

Council moved to Executive Session at 3:02 PM.

Seeing no further business, Vice-Chairperson Asprocolas moved to adjourn. Mr. Peck offered a second. Meeting adjourned at 4:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew DeFelice