

Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board
Division of Planning



Minutes for a Regular Meeting of the
MONMOUTH COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

August 5, 2026, 7:00 PM

Hybrid Meeting at One East Main Street, Freehold, NJ or Audio and Video Conference via WebEx

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Bullock called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Mr. Bullock read the "Open Public Meetings Act" Compliance Statement.

ATTENDANCE:

Present: Bullock, Clayton, DeFelice, Giambrone, Holmes, Incatasciato, Mosley, Pettyjohn, Van Mater, Errickson
Staff: Abbott, Barris, Beekman, Bezahler, Honigfeld, Kiley, Schmetterer
Representatives: Pat Butch, Jack McNaboe, Sean Pizzio (online), Tim Thomas, Betty Velez-Gimbel
Public: Amy Butewicz, Colin Dansberry, Thomas Fik, Jill Holzer, Max Holzer, Michael Holzer, Seth Holzer, Vincent Iuzzolino, Tara Kenyon, John Mazza (in person), John Mazza (online), M. McKinley Mertz, Chris Mumford, Kim Paulmenn, Anna Struk, Edward Struk, Rajeev Venkat, Nicole Voigt, Richard Williams, Patrick (last name unknown), and two unidentified call-in users

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mr. Pettyjohn motioned to adopt the July 2026 Regular Session minutes. Mr. DeFelice seconded the motion, which passed by voice vote.

CORRESPONDENCE AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

Ms. Kiley went through several items of correspondence which included a Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners Resolution (No. 2026-0507) authorizing the Open Space Tax Allocation of \$1,600,000 for Farmland Preservation among other things. There were two letters to landowners regarding potential deed of easement violations. In addition, there was an email exchange regarding an ongoing deed of easement violation.

REGULAR REPORTS

- A. *Chairman*: None
- B. *SADC*: None
- C. *Staff*: Ms. Kiley mentioned the status of the bylaws and suggested a draft should be before the MCADB in September. Ms. Kiley indicated that staff has been coordinating with Tim Thomas

of the Freehold Soil Conservation District and the Monmouth County Board of Health to add regular reports from the respective agencies. Ms. Kiley also mentioned the need to convene a subcommittee for the 2027 Farm Summit.

- D. *Municipal Representatives*: Pat Butch mentioned that Millstone Township is planning a meet-and-greet tentatively scheduled for September 12, 2026.
- E. *County Board of Agriculture*: Mr. DeFelice mentioned the Board of Agriculture's presence at the Monmouth County Fair. Through plant sales and donations, over \$2,000 was raised for their scholarship fund.
- F. *Rutgers Cooperative Extension*: Dr. Errickson also spoke about participation in the Monmouth County Fair. Dr. Errickson indicated that IPM webinars continue every second and fourth Tuesday. There is a twilight meeting scheduled for 5:30 PM on August 20th at Cream Ridge and another at Shaw Arboretum, Holmdel Park on September 3rd.
- G. *The Freehold Soil Conservation District*: Mr. Thomas introduced himself and gave a brief overview of the Freehold Soil Conservation District including its history and current focus.

OLD BUSINESS

Soil Scoring Update and Opportunity to Comment on NRCS Proposal

Ms. Honigfeld asked the Board if there were any further comments on the NRCS soil scoring proposal. Ms. Honigfeld indicated that once the proposal is final the Board may want to review and possibly amend the criteria for the County Planning Incentive Grant Program.

NEW BUSINESS

Potential Modifications of 2026 Calendar for Special Meetings

Ms. Kiley indicated that staff is attempting to set up Special Meetings, as provided for in the current bylaws, to accommodate pending Right to Farm matters.

Monitoring Summary July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Ms. Honigfeld referenced a monitoring summary staff prepared for the Board and indicated that staff completed inspections on 100% of over 200 easements. The report also includes some notable changes in operations observed by staff.

Special Occasion Event Permit (Block 164 Lots 8.01, 15.01, 16 & Block 168 Lot 38, Howell Township, Twin Pond Farms).

Ms. Honigfeld indicated that the Applicant could not attend the meeting. Ms. Honigfeld explained that the landowners met the criteria, and that the area being used for the event is estimated to be 2.5 acres, which is well below the maximum. Mr. DeFelice asked about parking. Ms. Honigfeld explained that the main parking will be on a one-acre exception area and spillover parking will be on the parcel across the street. Mr. DeFelice asked if there would be traffic control given the traffic flow on the street between the two properties. Ms. Honigfeld offered that the Board could suggest that in the resolution, or she could relay the recommendation to the landowners.

Memorialization of a Resolution Honoring the Service of Charles Buscaglia. Mr. Van Mater motioned to approve the draft resolution honoring Charles Buscaglia, and Mr. DeFelice seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

RIGHT-TO-FARM AND STEWARDSHIP ISSUES

Status Reports

Mr. Beekman reported the following updates on Right to Farm matters:

Winding Brook Farm, LLC: The matter is currently under appeal. Mr. Beekman is responding to discovery that has been served on the County; the response date has been extended to the end of August.

Lazy Rooster: The second portion of the hearing will be heard later in the evening.

Rosenfeld Ranch: A conference call is scheduled with Mr. Beekman, SADC's counsel, Applicant's counsel, and the Township's counsel to discuss a resubmission of the complaint response. In the meantime, SADC counsel will not forward an appeal to the OAL.

Mr. Beekman indicated that there are no other updates on other matters.

Hearing for Site-Specific Agricultural Management Practice Determination Request (Block 43, Lots 16.01 & 16.02, Millstone Township).

Mr. Bullock recused himself from the hearing, and Mr. DeFelice assumed the role of the Chair for the public hearing portion of the meeting.

Mr. Beekman went over some procedural matters and opened the floor to Ms. Voigt, the Applicant's attorney. Ms. Voigt repeated some background information on the application. Ms. Voigt listed the ordinances or regulations that the Applicant is seeking relief from:

- Stormwater to the extent over the State requirement – Municipal Requirement
- Buffering – Municipal Requirement
- Width of the Driveway/Parking Aisle – Municipal Requirement
- Off Street Loading Space – Municipal Requirement
- Widening of Driveway – as per County Planning Board requirements
- Dedication of Additional Right-of-Way requiring relocating of fence – County Requirement to which the Applicant seeks confirmation that it is an agricultural fence such that the County Planning Division could take under advisement when reviewing a waiver request.

Ms. Voigt explained that the Applicant had previously been denied by Millstone Township Zoning Board of Adjustment in October 2024 and has taken all of the comments from that denial under advisement. Ms. Voigt briefly explained modifications to the original plan. The witnesses Michael Holzer, Thomas Fik (Carol Engineering), and Tara Kenyon (Kenyon Planning) were sworn by Mr. Beekman.

Ms. Voigt reminded the Board that a commercial farm determination has already been obtained and stated that the “remaining question is whether the revised Farm to Glass cidery project and its processing and direct marketing operations, events and facilities are a generally accepted practice under the On-farm Direct Marketing Agricultural Management Practice and that the Municipal and County standards identified should yield to the agricultural purposes.” Ms. Voigt suggested that the proposed project is a “modest farm-based operation using predominantly farm-grown apples, limited public hours, controlled events, 30 onsite parking spaces with additional overflow, if needed, no off-site parking, existing buffers, and outside agency reviews occurring.”

Ms. Voigt explained that the Applicant is proposing that the plan be approved with two conditions in order to address some concerns of the municipality and neighbors. Those conditions are as follows: 1) there will be no parking of visitors or employee vehicles off site and 2) the event management plan submitted would be updated for consistency with any approval (resolution) granted by the Board.

Ms. Voigt spoke to the outside agencies reviewing the project. Those agencies include Monmouth County Planning Board (traffic and parking), the Board of Health (septic), the New Jersey Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control (plenary winery license), United States Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, and Freehold Soil Conservation District (erosion and sediment control certification).

Mr. Holzer testified and described the parcels that make up his Farm Management Unit and activities that are occurring on each of the 4 parcels. In 2020, Mr. Holzer stated that he converted part of one of the parcels from hay production to apple production, and in 2022 he planted 1,000 apple trees. Mr. Holzer covered some of the resources, expertise, and certifications he has been obtaining to produce the apples. Mr. Holzer explained that he owns all the equipment necessary to produce the apples. Mr. Holzer spoke briefly about the scale, size, and hours of the operation, including limited marketing events. Mr. Holzer explained that the plan was to have 24 seats, which include indoor and outdoor seating, and that the septic limitations set a maximum capacity of 57 people. Ms. Voigt clarified that the 57 would be inclusive of employees. Mr. Holzer stated that regardless of maximum capacity, the farm is still planning on starting off with 24 seats. Mr. Holzer pointed to Exhibit 7 and Exhibit 8 which include a floor plan and some renderings of the outside of the building. Mr. Holzer explained some of the food and activities that would be offered. Mr. Holzer spoke briefly about parking but deferred to the engineer for more details; he also spoke more operationally about the parking and the amount people on site at any one time. Ms. Voigt had Mr. Holzer clarify a few points regarding the public ability to come on the site for various reasons (package goods, tasting etc.).

Rajeev Venkat, Township Counsel, asked a question of Mr. Holzer regarding the septic capacity. Ms. Voigt explained how the NJDEP regulates septic and the correlation to the 57 people mentioned earlier. Mr. Venkat indicated that he will redirect this question to the engineer. Mr. Venkat asked Mr. Holzer if he was aware the Township had submitted objections to this project. Mr. Holzer confirmed he amended the application and confirmed that he believes it satisfied the Township's objections.

Mr. Beekman opened up the floor to the public for questions on Mr. Holzer's testimony. John Mazza asked a question regarding operations, should the venue grow as popular as some other farms in the area. Mr. Holzer indicated that he does not have enough products to be the size of the farms Mr. Mazza mentioned. Kim Paulmenn asked about portable toilets and the timing of removal, which Mr. Holzer addressed by stating they would be removed within days of the events and as soon as possible. Ms. Paulmenn asked about operating hours which Mr. Holzer responded at this time operating hours are proposed to be noon to dusk from Spring until Fall. Ms. Paulmenn also asked for clarification on the number of tables. Mr. Holzer clarified that 24 is the number of seats not tables and the maximum, given septic constraints, is 57. Ms. Paulmenn had additional operational questions, primarily around parking and number of guests, questions which Mr. Holzer addressed.

Richard Williams asked Mr. Holzer to explain what changes were made to address the issues that the Township had, referencing the original use variance submission to the Township which was rejected. Mr. Holzer indicated that he didn't receive feedback, he only received a denial of use. However, Mr. Holzer did say he received recommendations which were incorporated in the plan before the Board. Ms. Voigt clarified the reduction in size of the operation. Mr. Beekman explained the difference between a use variance and the site plan review and clarified why technically the town did not reject any specific aspect of the plan which was the basis of Mr. Williams' question. Ms. Voigt confirmed that it was a bifurcated application and that the Township never moved on to review site plan details.

Vincent Iuzzolino asked how the no off-site parking rule will be enforced. Mr. Holzer addressed that by deferring to the engineer. Mr. Iuzzolino also asked questions regarding Mr. Holzer's business intentions to which Mr. Holzer explained why he wants to pursue this project.

Colin Dansberry asked if there would be an end time to reservations. Mr. Holzer indicated that there would be a time limit, perhaps an hour or so but wouldn't commit to the details yet. Mr. Dansberry applauded Mr. Holzer for his scaled-down version of the project and understood operational details are still being worked out but he has a concern over people lingering on the property.

Mr. Beekman opened the floor to the Board for questions. Mr. DeFelice asked about marketing and possible pick-your-own events. Mr. Holzer indicated that he does not plan to do pick-your-own and that having events is simply to market his cider. Ms. Incatasciato asked a question about patrons coming on the property only for package goods. Mr. Holzer deferred to his engineer but did indicate package goods buyers would be using spots for a short amount of time.

Thomas Fik of Carroll Engineering was introduced as the next witness and qualified as an expert (engineer) by Mr. Beekman. Mr. Fik walked through the details of the plans and the site referring to a site plan designed by his firm. Mr. Fik referenced a Township Planning Review memo which recommended 24 spaces with 3 to 4 staff spaces. Mr. Fik indicated that they applied the Township's recommendation of the restaurant parking ratio which is 1 space per 3 seats. Mr. Fik indicated that by applying the ratio to the 24 seats, the requirement would be 8 parking spaces; by applying that same ratio to the maximum capacity of 57 people, the requirement would be 19 spaces. The plan calls for 30 on-site spaces; Mr. Fik gave a breakdown of the spots. Mr. Fik indicated there are also temporary spaces available, if needed. Mr. Fik indicated that there was a waiver from the County and the Millstone code regarding the width of the driveway. Mr. Fik indicated that a waiver was requested and the current plans satisfy the County's comments. Mr. Fik explained the emergency access road addition to the plan. Mr. Fik indicated that the Applicant was seeking a waiver from the Township on the buffer requirement given the existing buffers. Mr. Fik spoke to the loading area, which will double as the food truck area; therefore, no off-street loading spaces will be needed. Mr. Fik spoke about the Right-of-Way dedication and the fence impacting that area. Mr. Fik indicated that the Applicant is requesting to leave the fence until such time as improvements are being made to the Right-of-Way. Mr. Fik indicated that the Applicant is requesting relief from Millstone's stormwater standards such that they meet the NJDEP's requirement.

Mr. Venkat questioned Mr. Fik. He asked if there is room for cars to turn around at the end of the driveway without backing up. Mr. Fik confirmed in the affirmative. Mr. Venkat asked how many cars can be stacked at the end of the driveway. Mr. Fik indicated the plan calls for two in and two out. Mr. Venkat asked Mr. Fik to explain the parking numbers if the maximum capacity is reached. Mr. Fik explained the aforesaid restaurant ratio and that it included every person within the indoor and outdoor seating area.

Mr. Beekman opened the floor for questions from the public. Richard Williams asked about the three waivers: width of driveway, removal of fence from the right-of-way, and stormwater. There was some discussion around which entities or agencies the Applicant was requesting waivers from.

Joe Barris, Director of the Planning Division for Monmouth County, asked Mr. Fik questions regarding the status of the waivers and the Development Review by the County.

There was an exchange between Mr. Barris, Mr. Fik and Ms. Voigt resulting in clarification that there are two waivers being requested from the Development Review Committee which have not been

approved yet and the plan itself is still subject to review. Mr. Barris confirmed with Mr. Fik that a traffic impact statement will be submitted to the County.

Colin Dansberry asked for confirmation that the 24 seats combine indoor and outdoor seating; Mr. Fik affirmed. Mr. Dansberry asked a few more operational and safety questions, which Mr. Fik addressed. Dr. Dansberry asked questions regarding the septic tank with regard to the production of cider. Mr. Holzer responded by stating that there is a separate holding tank for any production waste. Mr. Fik added that the entire septic system is still subject to NJDEP review. Mr. Dansberry asked if there was an analysis done on the water table. Mr. Fik indicated that a deep analysis of the soil isn't warranted given everything is at grade.

Kim Paulmenn asked when the traffic safety study will be done. Mr. Fik answered that a traffic impact statement will be submitted with the next submission to the County. Ms. Paulmenn asked questions regarding the width of the driveway.

Mr. Beekman opened up questions to the Board. Mr. Pettyjohn asked if there is enough room to widen the driveway all the way down. Mr. Fik replied that it would drastically change the character of the property. Mr. Pettyjohn then suggested widening the driveway at least for the first 150 feet. Mr. Fik indicated that there is a turnout towards the end of the driveway.

Mr. Van Mater indicated that the areas on the side driveway will not be sustainable as passing areas. Ms. Voigt indicated that the Applicant will be seeking recommendations from the County and hopes to strike a balance of safety and reasonableness.

Mr. Holmes asked if the Applicant would be willing to put a small circular turnaround at the end of the driveway. Mr. Fik indicated it might be feasible and Mr. Holzer indicated that he did not object if the engineer can provide for it.

Mr. DeFelice asked if widening the driveway would impact the existing orchard. Mr. Fik indicated that it would not. Mr. DeFelice confirmed with Mr. Fik that the fence mentioned in conjunction with the waiver request was a deer fence. Mr. DeFelice also clarified with Ms. Voigt the 24 seats versus the 57 people maximum capacity. Ms. Voigt clarified the purpose of mentioning the 57-person maximum capacity was to address concerns regarding growth of the business.

Ms. Incatasciato asked a question regarding stacking reservations.

Mr. Pettyjohn asked if someone could do a K-turn at the apron. Mr. Fik said no.

Mr. DeFelice asked questions on the buffer specifically whether the trees were deciduous or evergreen.

Mr. Van Mater asked if there was any plan to replace compromised buffers.

Mr. Holzer and Ms. Voigt went through Apple Maps aerials describing what type of buffer exists between each resident on Shield Road.

Kim Paulmenn asked the date of the aerial maps and Mr. Holzer was not aware.

Mr. Beekman marked the aerial maps submitted by Ms. Voigt as Exhibit A27.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chris Mumford, of Wall, stated he has a 7.5-acre farm in North Wall. Mr. Mumford requested assistance from the Board in getting his SSAMP determination application heard.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, September 1, 2026, at 7:00 PM.**

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from Mr. Pettyjohn seconded by Mr. Van Mater, the meeting adjourned at 9:51 PM, which was approved by voice vote.