

Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board
Division of Planning



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

September 1, 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, Errickson, Holmes, Incatasciato, Licitra, Mosley, Pettyjohn, Van Mater

Staff: Abbott, Beekman, Bezahler, Honigfeld, Kiley, Neary, Schmetterer

Representatives: Pat Butch, Chris Helminger, Jack McNaboe, Sean Pizzio (online), Alina Robinson, Betty Velez-Gimbel

Public: Andrew Ball, Amanda Brockwell (online), Amy Butewicz (online), Tom Dancer, Colin Dansberry (online), Dan DiGiovanni (online), Kathleen DiGiovanni (online), Thomas Fik, Jill Holzer, Max Holzer, Michael Holzer, Seth Holzer (online), Vincent Iuzzolino (online), Tara Kenyon, Carolyn Korotky, Peter Korotky, John Mazza, M. McKinley Mertz, Chris Mumford, Debra Mumford, Stephen Musto, Kim Paulmenn (online), Franco Rauseo, William Rowohlt, Rajeev Venkat, Nicole Voigt, Richard Williams, Andrew Wood, Anonymous 13 (online), Jake (last name unknown, online), Joe (last name unknown, online)

RIGHT-TO-FARM AND STEWARDSHIP ISSUES

Status Reports

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

- Lazy Rooster and Mumford – Both matters will be heard this evening.
- Rosenfeld Ranch – The matter is being reviewed for reconsideration of the dismissal and pending additional information from applicant's counsel to do so.
- Samrock Stables – The applicant submitted a revised plan a few days ago. Staff and counsel will review and bring to the Board's attention once review is complete.
- Carm's Farm – The applicant continues to work with the town therefore no updates.
- Maple Leaf – There are no updates.
- Oak Hill – There was a request for more information sent out this morning but nothing to bring to the Board at this time.

- Winding Brook Farm, LLC – The matter is currently under appeal. Discovery should be completed by the end of this month, and an OAL hearing date should be forthcoming.

Continuation of Hearing for a 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 Chair for the duration of the agenda item.

Nicole Voigt indicated that the applicant's plan has been updated to reflect some of the comments heard at the last meeting as well as some of the verbal comments mentioned at the Monmouth County Planning Board Development Review Committee ("DRC") meeting. Ms. Voigt explained that the report that was issued by DRC dated August 24, 2026, did not reflect the most recent plan included in her August 20, 2026 submission but rather a prior version. Ms. Voigt stated that Mr. Fik would be recalled to clarify the changes made to the plan.

Thomas Fik introduced the revised plan dated August 19, 2026 (referenced above and included in Ms. Voigt's August 20, 2026, submission) which was intended to relieve concerns about traffic and the impact to Sweetmans Lane. Mr. Fik noted that the County [DRC] questioned the entrance to the property and the potential of cars stacking on Sweetmans Lane. Mr. Fik acknowledged that, after checking the previous plan, it did not have sufficient length. Mr. Fik indicated that the plan now includes a 20-foot-wide driveway for the first 75 feet, allowing three to four cars to stack. In addition, the plan now includes two additional pullover areas; there is one on the ingress and one on the egress. Mr. Fik double-checked the existing driveway length, and it is 12 feet in some areas and more or less in others. Mr. Fik indicated the current plan proposes a full 12-foot-wide driveway the whole way from Sweetmans Lane down to the cidery. Five-mile-per-hour speed limit signs were also added. Mr. Fik also agreed to use the gravel access road previously identified as an emergency exit when there are events.

Mr. Fik spoke to the three waivers requested from the DRC, one of which was granted related to the distance to the boundary line for the adjoining property. The remaining requests have to do with the width of the driveway and the right-of-way. Mr. Fik continued that at the request of the DRC, the applicant submitted a traffic impact statement. There was an exchange between Ms. Voigt and Mr. Fik regarding Exhibit A-030. Ms. Voigt requested that Mr. Fik confirm that, based on his opinion and the comments received by the DRC, he believes the current plan is adequately protective of public health and safety. Ms. Voigt and Mr. Fik had an exchange to clarify that any further revisions requested by the DRC would only further solidify the public health and safety of the plan. Therefore, the team requested that, should Board approve the application subject to DRC review, then there would be no need to return to the Board if the DRC comments resulted in further amendments to the plan.

Mr. Beekman opened up the floor for questions from the township of which there were none. Mr. DeFelice opened with Board questions. Mr. DeFelice had questions on the width of the driveway. Mr. DeFelice referenced the most recent DRC report and a letter from Monmouth County Engineering to Joe Barris. Mr. Fik clarified how far down the 20-foot driveway goes from Sweetmans Lane which is 75 feet, and that the remaining driveway is 12 feet wide. Mr. DeFelice asked how far the [first] turnaround is from [the end] of the 20-foot-wide portion. Mr. Fik responded that it is probably [another] 50 feet to the first turnaround.

Mr. Pettyjohn asked questions regarding how many people could enter and exit the property at one time and referred to the 70 vehicle trips during a peak hour from the traffic impact statement. Ms. Voigt clarified that the 70 vehicle trips during a peak hour is 35 in and 35 out, not 70 in and 70 out.

Mr. Pettyjohn referenced [approximately] 10,000 [carried] vehicles [per day in the vicinity of the site] referenced in the traffic impact statement.

Mr. DeFelice asked a question regarding when a car will be intercepted if they do not have a reservation. Mr. Fik again explained the use of the turn-outs. Mr. DeFelice asked why the plan does not extend the 20-foot portion of the driveway 50 more feet to the turnouts. Mr. Fik answered that extending any further would trigger stormwater management coverage issues. Mr. Fik elaborated on what triggers the need for additional stormwater management implementation. Mr. Pettyjohn asked, and Mr. Fik confirmed that the plan would exceed the threshold if the driveway were to be 20 feet wide for its entire length. Ms. Voigt asked Mr. Beekman a procedural question to which Mr. Beekman explained that, if there was an issue with something that was approved, then the resolution would include a provision to allow the Board to revisit the matter. Mr. DeFelice reiterated that the concern is cars coming in and out at the same time. Mr. DeFelice stated he believes the parking has been addressed. Mr. DeFelice speculated that if the circular driveway, which is currently planned for events only was available all the time, that it would alleviate the concern. Mr. Pettyjohn asked if it could be used as a permanent ingress/egress. Ms. Voigt replied that it is Mr. Holzer's preference to see if it is needed given the engineer's advice. Mr. Mosley asked about the length of the flare at the end of the driveway clarifying whether one car could turn left and one car could turn right, at the same time. Mr. Fik responded no, probably not. Mr. Van Mater also observed that it would be a very tight driveway at 12 feet.

Mr. Beekman opened the floor to the public for questions of the witness. Richard Williams had questions regarding capacity. Ms. Voigt clarified the NJDEP septic requirements and referred to Mr. Holzer's testimony on the use of portable toilets which is permitted by the NJDEP. Mr. Williams asked how many people can be at an event to which Mr. Fik said that would depend on the parking limitations or 30 cars. Mr. Williams asked if the applicant was seeking a waiver on stormwater. Mr. Fik clarified that the applicant is seeking a waiver from the municipal standards and an allowance to adhere to the NJDEP standards which are lower than Millstone Township's. Ms. Butch asked if the traffic study referenced a specific number of trips per day that go past the driveway in question. Mr. Fik read from the report, "NJDOT traffic volume data indicate that Sweetmans Lane (CR 1) carries approximately 10,000 vehicles per day in the vicinity of the site, with reported volumes of approximately 10,438 to 10,638 vehicles per day north of the site near the Manalapan Brook bridge." Pat Butch questioned if that is only by the Manalapan border and not in the actual town and clarified that her question was if there was a number that represented traffic in front of the driveway. Kim Paulmenn asked a question regarding the impact of a waiver of the dedication versus an easement. Mr. Fik confirmed that there would be significant adjustments to the layout should the fence be removed. Ms. Paulmenn asked a question regarding making a left-hand turn from the other driveway. Mr. Fik answered that the DRC has received sight triangles with the plan and ultimately it would be up to the DRC. Colin Dansberry posed a question regarding operating hours to which Mr. Holzer reiterated his plan. Mr. Dansberry then asked about lighting to which Mr. Fik answered. Mr. Dansberry asked Mr. Fik to speak to visitors leaving after dusk with limited lighting. Mr. Iuzzolino asked how he could mitigate folks turning into his driveway if DRC determined that only a right turn could be made out of the driveway. Mr. Fik answered that there has been no mention of that to date. John Mazza had a question on portable toilets to which Mr. Fik referenced Mr. Holzer's previous testimony.

Ms. Voigt called the next witness and asked Tara Kenyon, of Kenyon Consulting, to qualify herself. Ms. Kenyon gave her qualifications as a licensed planner in New Jersey with a specialization in farmland. Ms. Kenyon spoke to the On-farm Direct Marketing AMP, its history, and purpose. Ms. Kenyon walked through the key components of the AMP relevant to this application (hours of operation; lighting; sanitary facilities; signage; parking; buffers; approvals of site plan; and how it fits

in with local, county, and state planning) and explained how Mr. Holzer's application complies. At Ms. Voigt's prompt, Ms. Kenyon read the definitions of OFDM facilities, OFDM activities, and OFDM events into the record. In addition, Ms. Voigt asked Ms. Kenyon to comment on the scale of the plan compared to others she has seen. Ms. Kenyon commented that the scale is significantly smaller than others she has seen and worked on.

Mr. Beekman opened the floor to the Board for questions. Mr. DeFelice asked about lighting which Ms. Kenyon could not answer. Mr. DeFelice asked about buffers and the use of deciduous trees, asserting that in the winter there would not be much of a buffer for some surrounding landowners. Ms. Kenyon's opinion was that there was enough buffering. Ms. Voigt asked Mr. DeFelice which property he was concerned about. Mr. DeFelice specified that it was numbers 8 and 10.

Mr. Beekman opened the floor to questions from the public after the township confirmed they had no questions for Ms. Kenyon. Mr. Dansberry asked a question regarding diversification of farm income which the witness could not answer. Ms. Paulmenn asked if Ms. Kenyon had worked on farms of this size and proximity to residents which are permitted to sell 8% alcohol. Ms. Kenyon stated she could not speak to other farms; however, if there was a farm smaller than Mr. Holzer's that met the requirements it would be afforded Right to Farm protection. Ms. Paulmenn asked if Ms. Kenyon had been on the property to look at the buffer to which she answered no.

Rajeev Venkat read a statement from the township stating that given the amended plan and the addition of parking the township's limited opposition has been satisfied. Mr. Venkat referred to Exhibit M-002 during his comments.

Mr. Beekman opened the floor for public comment. Mr. Mazza conveyed that he still didn't think that the parking and driveway are going to work. He also expressed concerns that the expert speaking to buffering never walked the property which he had an issue with. He offered a few other concerns. Tom Dancer spoke of how he met Mr. Holzer and admired everything he has done thus far and spoke in favor of Mr. Holzer's plan. Mr. Williams reiterated that the location [size and shape of the lot] is the issue not what Mr. Holzer is trying to do. Mr. Dansberry asserted that it remains a public safety concern due to the winding road approaching the farm. Ms. Paulmenn stated that this is the smallest cidery in Monmouth and Morris counties, and there is huge concern over traffic and safety for the local residents. Ms. Butch introduced herself as a farmer in Millstone. She spoke to the challenges of farming and asked that the Board give farmers the opportunity to do what is permitted under the Right to Farm Act to remain sustainable. Amy Butewicz spoke in support of the project and Mr. Holzer. She also disclosed that she is chair of the Millstone Agricultural Advisory Council, which is an open public council, and that nobody but Mr. Holzer came to any of the meetings. Ms. Butewicz urged residents to reach out to the council regarding agricultural matters in the future. Vincent Iuzzolino spoke and noted that some of the residents only found out about this plan recently. Mr. Iuzzolino voiced concern about the music and the functionality of the reservation system.

Ms. Voigt's closing remarks summarized the proposed guardrails of the conditions that would apply should the application be approved. This included what requirements would be in the Resolution, subsequent DRC approval, the event management plan, use of an alternative one-way driveway if at any time a queue should develop, and state standards (stormwater, Noise Control Act, etc.) that would be part of an approval should one be granted.

Mr. Beekman opened up deliberations. Mr. Van Mater and Mr. Mosley spoke to the completeness of the application. Mr. Pettyjohn expressed concern over the number of people that could be on the property at any one time and suggested a maximum capacity per event. Mr. DeFelice shared that he

believes that traffic concerns have been addressed and that he could now better appreciate the complexity and financial burden of widening the driveway given its tie to stormwater compliance.

Mr. Pettyjohn moved to approve the proposal, and Mr. Van Mater seconded the motion. Mr. Beekman clarified that the motion was to approve the application subject to the conditions outlined by Ms. Voigt, as well as the allowances within the On-Farm Direct Marketing AMP. The following additional conditions were set: normal operating capacity of the tasting room cidery facility shall be limited to 57 seats, consistent with the septic system capacity; capacity for special events, when portable restrooms are available, shall be limited to 60 cars; hours of operation shall be from noon to dusk; and vehicles shall be directed to use the adjacent drive/emergency access driveway, as depicted on the plan, whenever traffic entering the property exceeds the stacking capacity of the main driveway [approximately three vehicles]. The motion passed unanimously.

Hearing for a Site-Specific Agricultural Management Practice Determination Request (Block 243, Lot 7, Wall Township)

Mr. Beekman opened up the floor to Andrew Ball, the applicant's attorney. Mr. Ball introduced the property and the property owner. Mr. Ball explained that his client is seeking a Site-Specific Agricultural Management Practice determination for the construction of agricultural buildings on 1099 Morris Lane in Wall. The property is located in the RR5 zone where agriculture is permitted use.

Mr. Ball explained that the applicant is looking for approval to construct a 1,800 square feet high tunnel, 2,160 square feet greenhouse, and 768 square feet combined barn and farm store, to be used for agricultural purposes including on-farm direct marketing. Mr. Ball called Chris Mumford to go through details of the proposed farm operation. Mr. Beekman swore Mr. Mumford in. Mr. Mumford explained that the majority of his business is growing and selling organic plants and vegetables. Mr. Mumford explained that the majority of the sales are directly to restaurants, but he does sell to the public.

Mr. Ball asked Mr. Mumford to go through the criteria for eligibility to which Mr. Mumford explained he satisfied all of the criteria. Mr. Ball referenced Exhibits A-13 and A-14 to support the income threshold element of the criteria. Mr. Ball requested Mr. Mumford confirm that the farm is assessed as farmland, is more than 5 acres, is owned by the applicant and his spouse, and Hay Mumford LLC is the only entity operating the farm. Mr. Ball referred to Exhibit A7 for the Wall Township code and zoning to support agricultural as a permitted use in the applicant's zone. Mr. Ball confirmed that there are no other state requirements needed.

Mr. Mumford described his vision for the farm store. Mr. Ball requested that Mr. Mumford confirm his understanding of the 51% production/sales requirement which he confirmed. Mr. Beekman asked Mr. Ball to have his client confirm that the activities proposed on the property fall within N.J.S.A. 4:1C-9(a), (c), (d), (e), (g), and (h).

Mr. Beekman moved to deliberation given no questions from objectors, public or the Board. Board members commented briefly on the straightforwardness of the application and Mr. Pettyjohn motioned to deem the farm a Commercial Farm. Mr. DeFelice seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of a commercial farm determination.

Mr. Beekman closed out the commercial farm portion of the hearing and opened up the second portion of the hearing – review of activities. Mr. Mumford explained his planting schedule. Mr. Mumford explained that he is organic and there is demand for his products, especially from restaurants. Mr.

Mumford said his focus is education. Mr. Mumford also mentioned the growth of his fig trees and that they will be a good portion of the farm and act as buffers.

Mr. Ball asked Mr. Mumford to describe hours of operation, which will be 9 to 5, seasonally. Mr. Mumford testified that they would start in spring with May being the busiest month. Plant sales end by July. Mr. Mumford spoke of the possibility of 6, in the summer, more likely 4 educational events during the year, such as gardening classes. Mr. Mumford said his events will attract people, and they would usually cap the number of attendees. Mr. Ball had Mr. Mumford confirm that he does not anticipate an event that would have more people than the parking can accommodate. Mr. Ball asked Mr. Mumford to confirm that there is a bathroom, with a hand-sanitizing station, available in the proposed barn should circumstances trigger the requirement in the On-farm Direct Marketing AMP. Mr. Ball and Mr. Mumford confirmed all equipment and materials would be held in the barn. Mr. Mumford explained that he would prefer the least amount of signage necessary and would conform to the AMP and does not expect any buses, but large vans are permitted. Mr. Mumford also responded that any events would not interfere with any future use of the property for agricultural purposes. Mr. Mumford indicated that of the larger events listed in the 2:76-2A.13(m)(1-6) pick-your-own would be the only possible event that may occur but only if there was a very prolific fig year and it was necessary. Mr. Ball had Mr. Mumford confirm he understood the parameters for such events in the rare instance they take place. Mr. Mumford also affirmed his understanding that an event management plan would be necessary any time the volume of traffic and guests are going to be significantly greater than the traffic regularly associated with on-farm direct marketing activities. In addition, Mr. Mumford confirmed he is aware that if an event management plan were to be implemented it would be filed with the township.

Mr. Ball directed the Board to Exhibit M1 which is a letter from the township in support of the application.

Mr. Beekman confirmed there were no objector questions and turned to the Board for questions. Mr. Beekman asked Mr. Mumford to speak to how many attendees he might have at events. Mr. Mumford gave examples such as farm-to-table dinners where 30 to 40 people might attend although he is not currently planning on doing farm-to-table dinners. Mr. Bullock asked for confirmation on the setback relief. Mr. Ball explained that Wall Township has a 400-foot setback requirement (commercial building to nearest residence) and Mr. Mumford noted that his closest neighbor to the farm store is 277 feet. Mr. Ball pointed out the On-farm Direct Marketing AMP setback requirement is 100 feet.

Mr. Beekman confirmed that they are seeking relief from ordinances in addition to being able to operate pursuant to the On-farm Direct Marketing AMP. Mr. Ball stated and Mr. Mumford affirmed that any marketing would be consistent with the AMP.

Mr. Beekman confirmed that there were no other questions for the applicant. Mr. Ball introduced the applicant's engineer as the next witness, and Mr. Beekman swore him in and qualified him.

Stephen Musto, of InSite Engineering, gave an explanation of the existing conditions of the property and then reviewed the proposed structures and their uses. Mr. Musto went over the areas where the proposed plan would conform to Wall ordinances. Mr. Musto confirmed that all of the proposed structures comply with the On-farm Direct Marketing AMP. Mr. Musto detailed the utilities and stormwater management and stated that the drainage pattern would not be altered. Mr. Musto spoke about traffic patterns in the vicinity and sight lines at the ingress or egress. Mr. Musto pointed out where the private driveway adjoins the public right-of-way. Mr. Musto explained how 22 cars would fit on the gravel driveway outside of the deer fence plus 8 spaces within the deer fence. Mr. Musto

added that the ADA space will be located on a concrete pad. Mr. Musto noted that there could be an additional 4 spaces of overflow parking on that same concrete pad. Mr. Musto stated that, including overflow parking, the property could provide 34 spaces. Mr. Musto stated that residential refuse is handled using typical cans, but agricultural waste is maintained and composted on the property. Mr. Musto spoke about minimum lighting with no light spillage anticipated. Mr. Musto talked about the buffers including the existing woods, figs (once mature), and arborvitaes. Mr. Musto indicated there will be minimal signage and any signage will conform to the On-farm Direct Marketing AMP. Mr. Musto confirmed all other agencies have been satisfied.

Mr. Van Mater asked a question regarding the body of water shown on the plan which Mr. Musto addressed. Mr. Beekman addressed the public for questions. Peter Korotky asked how the traffic will flow from the farm to the public right-of-way. Mr. Musto referenced a photo in the Board packet. Mr. Ball directed Mr. Korotky to address his concerns about the stop sign to the municipality or the police. Mr. Korotky asked what the speed limit would be coming out of the farm. Mr. Musto said a modest speed.

Mr. Beekman opened up the floor to public comments. Mr. Korotky offered his concern that cars may drive on his property given the proposed parking structure. Mr. Korotky maintained that he has to put stones on his property to prevent people from driving on his lawn. Carolyn Korotky raised her concerns regarding safety given the visibility of the surrounding streets. Danny DiGiovanni indicated that he and his wife have no objection to Mr. Mumford's plan. Amanda Brockwell spoke and gave her support for the Mumfords. Andrew Wood provided his full support for the application via chat online.

Mr. Ball requested the opportunity to have Mr. Musto address some of the neighbors' questions from the public comments. Mr. Ball brought Mr. Musto up for redirect for the limited purpose of answering those few questions. Mr. Musto stated that there will be no further changes to the driveway in response to the question regarding "stabilized construction entrance" indicated on the plan. Mr. Musto anticipated that Mr. Mumford would start construction immediately following approval should it be granted and construction vehicles would use the existing driveway.

Mr. Ball encouraged neighbors to reach out to the township for concerns about the surrounding public roads. Mr. Ball said that the applicant is willing to add a 5 MPH speed limit sign along the driveway, otherwise the applicant rests on the application, as submitted.

Mr. Beekman opened up the floor for deliberations. Mr. DeFelice requested the use of a 5 MPH and Proceed with Caution signs. Mr. DeFelice made a motion to approve the application as presented, with the addition of signage referenced. Mr. Pettyjohn seconded the motion. Mr. Beekman clarified the approval was for relief of two municipal ordinances and the allowance of on-farm direct marketing in conformance with the On-farm Direct Marketing AMP.

OLD BUSINESS

Potential Special Meeting Dates: September 28 (7 PM), November 18 (7 PM), December 9 (2 PM)

Mr. Bullock indicated that the Board would defer all reports and new business until the next meeting other than the matter of Special Meeting dates. The Board agreed to reserve the dates mentioned above as possible Special Meeting Dates.

NEW BUSINESS – NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT – NONE

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at 7:30 PM.**

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from Mr. Pettyjohn, seconded by Mr. DeFelice and approved by voice vote, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 PM.