

Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board
Division of Planning



Minutes for a Regular Meeting of the
MONMOUTH COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
November 5, 2025, 7:30 PM

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

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Matthews called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Mr. Matthews read the “Open Public Meetings Act” Compliance Statement.

ATTENDANCE:

Present: Bullock, Buscaglia, Clayton, DeFelice, Dr. Errickson, Giambrone, Matthews, Pettyjohn, Van Mater
Staff: Beekman, Bezahler, Honigfeld, Kiley
Representatives: Pat Butch, Jack McNaboe, Tom Morin, Katie Mazella (SADC – Online), Sean Pizzio (SADC)
Public: Melissa Cooke, Betty Velez-Gimbel,

NEW BUSINESS

ADOPTION MINUTES

Mr. Bullock motioned to adopt the October 2025 regular session minutes. Mr. Giambrone seconded the motion which passed by voice vote. Mr. Pettyjohn abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

REGULAR REPORTS

- A. *Chairman:* Mr. Matthews noted that the subcommittee is still working on the Farm Summit and has been in touch with Dr. Schilling and Mr. Roohr regarding their participation. There is a plan for the subcommittee to meet in the first week of December.
- B. *State:* Katie Mazella reported that the SADC will be hosting two meetings on estate and succession planning to be held on November 17th and December 17th. More information can be found on the SADC website. The SADC closed on 13 farms throughout September and October using the new formula value with an average increase in offers being 23% over traditional offers. The SADC has added an agricultural resource page to its website. The final revisions to the soil and water conservation rules were approved at the September 25th SADC meeting to be effective in the December edition of the *NJ Register* [this sentence was edited after December 2, 2025]. Rules amending the Pinelands formula were published in the *NJ Register* on October 6th triggering the 60-day comment period.

- C. Staff: Ms. Honigfeld had no additional reports.
- D. *Municipal Representatives*: Ms. Butch stated that the Millstone Agricultural Advisory Board is working on the annual Municipal PIG update that is due by December 15th.
- E. *County Board of Agriculture*: Mr. DeFelice reported that the Board supported the FFA students going to the nationals by giving them each \$100 towards their trip. Mr. DeFelice also noted that four members from New Jersey have made it to the Eastern National 4-H Roundup in Louisville, KY (November 7-9) and three of those students are from Monmouth County! New Jersey Farm Bureau conference is November 17-18.
- F. *Rutgers Cooperative Extension*: The search committee for the 4-H director has received 21 applications and a narrowed pool of 5 will submit video applications. In person interviews will take place on December 11, and the committee hopes to make a recommendation to the dean and department chairs by year end. Virginia Kryzanowski (4-H) will be retiring on December 1st after 23 years. Dr. Errickson reported that at the Monmouth County Board of Agricultural meeting there was a report of grasshopper issues. The Department of Agricultural has reported the introduction of the Asian rice grasshopper. It was found in Burlington County but has not been discovered in Monmouth County. There was an exchange between Mr. Matthews and Mr. Van Mater regarding the grasshopper. Mr. Van Mater reported that the Dept of Ag surveyed his farm for the grasshopper, but none were found.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Section 19 Review Block 42 Lot 22, Howell Township

Ms. Kiley introduced the proposed project and the regulation requiring the Notice of Intent (NOI) and the Board's review. Melissa Cooke, of Diamond Communications LLC, addressed the Board's questions and spoke to the technicalities of the request. Several Board members had questions regarding the history of the property. Ms. Honigfeld had a question regarding the alternatives analysis portion of the review. Ms. Cooke responded as follows:

- T-Mobile's objective is to improve wireless coverage along CR547 and the surrounding area which is mostly residential homes and farmland.
- T-Mobile initially evaluated whether there are existing communication towers within T-Mobile's search area – a 0.5-mile radius of the intersection of CR547 and Oak Glen Road, which there were none.
- T-Mobile then evaluated existing infrastructure such as multi-story commercial or agricultural buildings with sufficient height to enable T-Mobile to transmit above the existing treetops, which there were none.
- T-Mobile then looked at alternative structures such as the JCP&L electrical transmission towers. A JCP&L electrical transmission line (the "Line") exits at the aforementioned property. The Line has a tower specifically built to support wireless communications including multiple carriers and is a viable option for T-Mobile's installation.
- T-Mobile did not investigate any additional sites once the Line was identified as the final solution, as this would require the construction of a new tower and would not be consistent with Howell Township Land Use Ordinance § 188-98 - Telecommunications Facilities. More specifically in Section A – Purpose, Item 4 includes the following language, "Establish a Township priority for the location of telecommunication towers and antennas upon existing water towers, existing municipal towers, existing antenna towers and existing utility towers, rather than construction of new towers and antennas". In addition, Item (5) states, "[the Township] strongly encourages the joint use of new and existing tower sites as a primary option rather than construction of additional towers."

Mr. Bullock moved to approve the project, and Mr. Pettyjohn seconded that motion which was approved by voice vote. Mr. Matthews abstained.

RIGHT-TO-FARM AND STEWARDSHIP ISSUES

Ms. Honigfeld reported on several easements:

- Huddler/Meyers – The landowner executed an agreement drafted by Mr. Beekman to ensure compliance with the SADC's septic policy when the property is sold.
- Lois K. Rogers Trust/Sangillo Farm – The landowner submitted a woodland management plan as previously requested.
- Fretz/ Search farm – The roofing company is no longer operation on the property.
- Peplowski/Dykeman –Staff reviewed a solar application.

Status Reports

Mr. Beekman reported on a few matters. There was no change in the Basselini v. Crawford; a conference call occurred, and another call has been set for mid-December. Mr. Beekman still feels the matter will be withdrawn. Samrock Stables is forthcoming, and there is an initial site visit scheduled for November 14th. The commercial farm eligibility portion of the hearing will take place at the December 2nd meeting. Ms. Honigfeld reported that a party in the Winding Brook matter filed an appeal. The SADC had not forwarded it to the Office of Administrative Law and instead encouraged counsel to look at relevant case law before deciding to proceed. Ms. Honigfeld mentioned that staff had been asked to attend a site visit at Carm's Farm in Colts Neck. Ms. Honigfeld reported that a conflict resolution request filing is anticipated but on staff's recommendation the township start with mediation to narrow the scope of any request to the Board. Ms. Honigfeld noted that numerous activities occur on the farm, and the purpose of mediation would be to ensure that each activity is routed to the correct entity or process (town variance, MCADB approval etc.) In addition, Ms. Honigfeld mentioned that due to the number of parking spaces being added, the farm will have to go through development review process which is a different County approval process. [Clarification was subsequently obtained that the additional parking spaces triggered review because the farm abuts a County Road – County of Monmouth Development Review Regulations – Volume One 1.05-3]. Ms. Honigfeld also indicated that there are two additional matters that may surface as formal complaints.

Update on Draft Right to Farm Forms

Ms. Honigfeld gave a brief update on some cosmetic changes, added resource links, and an update to the language strongly encouraging applicants and respondents to contact staff before endeavoring to complete the forms and compile documentation.

Mr. DeFelice asked for clarification on the applicants with LLC status, and Ms. Honigfeld directed him to the SADC's Policy (Right to Farm) P-2-4, effective September 28, 2017.

Mr. DeFelice pointed to the health and safety question on the forms indicating that a farmer may not be aware of all that would constitute a health and safety issue so stressed the importance of reaching out to staff before filling out forms. Ms. Honigfeld also mentioned, emphasizing Mr. DeFelice's point, that staff added references to documents such as traffic studies which may be one aspect of health and safety question. Mr. DeFelice and Ms. Honigfeld had an exchange about the site plan requirements which culminated with agreement that it would depend on the order of magnitude (i.e. one or two aspects of the farm or full site plan approval) of the request.

Mr. Matthews called for a consensus to move forward with making a beta test version of the updated forms publicly available. Mr. Matthews received unanimous consent from the Board members.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Butch reiterated, from a previous meeting, a desire to receive information prior to the monthly meetings.

Ms. Butch also commented that she is used to a public session being opened prior to motions being made. Ms. Butch also appreciated the Board's idea to request feedback, via a survey, on the updated forms.

Ms. Butch also encouraged the Board to wait for recommendations from the agricultural industry that may come out of the resolutions from the New Jersey Farm Bureau annual meeting before making any permanent changes to policy.

Ms. Butch conveyed a question she has been getting from the agricultural community. "What do you consider a single enterprise and give examples of what it is and what it not?"

Mr. Matthews asked some clarifying questions regarding Ms. Butch's comments and asked Mr. Beekman to address. Mr. Beekman stated that in any Right to Farm matters there are ample opportunities for public comments, including opportunities to question witnesses. As for ordinary course of business, Mr. Beekman indicated that the public comment period will remain as a general comment period at the end of each meeting, at the discretion of the Board. Mr. Beekman addressed Ms. Butch's initial comments by stating the Board will not change its process with regard to board packets. However, the updated forms, one portion of the current Board packet, were sent out to the Board affiliates including Ms. Butch prior to the meeting. [It was determined that there was a technology issue with Ms. Butch's email delivery, but others did receive it. The parties will work to rectify the issue].

As for the question on single enterprise, Mr. Beekman stated that the Board would not opine, at this meeting, as it relates to interpretation of case law. The Don Vona case specifically calls out the types of information/documentation that may support an entity's single enterprise status. The Board cannot act to interpret case law outside the merits of an individual matter such that it would be used in an application. Ms. Beahler directed attention to the aforementioned forms and the references made to documentation that would support single enterprise status.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 7:00 PM.**

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from Mr. Buscaglia and seconded by Mr. Pettyjohn the meeting adjourned at 9:32 PM, which was approved by voice vote.