



AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING - MINUTES

June 4, 2020

8:00PM

PRESENT

Bob Puskas, Chair

Al Puchalek

Craig Feibel

Rik Johnson

Councilman Ted Chase, Council Liaison to AAC

Tara Kenyon, Land Preservation and Management Consultant

CALL TO ORDER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6)

Chairman Puskas called the meeting to order at 8:04PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The meeting will be opened to the Public to provide time for comments and/or questions related to the agenda

Craig Feibel made a motion to open the meeting for Public Comment, which was seconded by Al Puchalek. All agreed and the meeting was opened for Public Comment.

Hearing no comment from the Public, Al Puchalek made a motion to close the Public Comment portion of the meeting, which was seconded by Rik Johnson. All agreed and the public comment portion of the meeting was closed.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Craig Feibel made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2020 meeting, which was seconded by Al Puchalek. All agreed and the minutes were approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Hunting on State-owned properties bordering/near farmland

Chairman Puskas discussed problematic terms placed in the farm lease agreements from the State of New Jersey. The types of agricultural products that can be grown are very limited, and in some instances the farmer is not protected from public access.

Tara Kenyon added that the limitation of growing of accepted agricultural products is in deference to the New Jersey Right-to-Farm Act. Tara reviewed the leases, as requested by Chairman Puskas, and agreed that some of the terms are not agriculture-friendly and can even restrict the operation of the farmer who leases the land.

Councilman Chase recommended forwarding these issues to the Open Space Advisory Committee and potentially the Township Council.

Tara will provide these comments to the OSAC and keep this Committee posted of how this issue proceeds.

Farms Under Threat: The State of the States (American Farmland Trust)

Tara Kenyon updated the Committee that that American Farmland Trust recently released a very informative document entitled, "Farms Under Threat: The State of the States". This report details the status of the agricultural industry across the United States in terms of income, access to affordable land and resources, employment statistics, succession planning, regulatory constraints and more. The report also provides recommendations as to how regions within the country can improve the conditions for agriculture through legislation, funding, and education. She recommended that the Committee review it at their leisure: <https://farmland.org/project/farms-under-threat/>

OLD BUSINESS

Close of hunting season and plans for 2020/2021

The hunting season closed in February 2020, with Hunter Summary Reports due in March. Due to Covid, the Wildlife Management Committee has decided to allow for these reports to be submitted with next year's permit. At this time, very few have been submitted and those that have are in the Township Offices.

The Wildlife Management Committee will meet again in the next month to discuss signage, addition of the former Craig Property (295 Bunker Hill Road), and any changes to the application.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Al Puchalek made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss current property negotiations related to farmland preservation. The motion was seconded by Rik Johnson and agreed to by all. The motion carried and the Committee entered Executive Session.

Rik Johnson made a motion to exit Executive Session which was seconded by Craig Feibel. All agreed and the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Craig Feibel made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Rik Johnson. All agreed, and the meeting adjourned at 8:56PM.