



MINUTES -  
VIRTUAL AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

January 7, 2021  
8:00PM

PRESENT

Bob Puskas, Chair  
Cathy Blumig, Vice-Chair  
Al Puchalek  
Rik Johnson  
Councilman Ted Chase, Liaison to Township Council  
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)

The meeting was called to order at 8:03PM by Chairman Bob Puskas.

ANNUAL REORGANIZATION OF THE FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The meeting was opened for nominations for Chair of the Franklin Township Agriculture Advisory Committee for 2021. Cathy Blumig nominated Bob Puskas, which was seconded by Rik Johnson. All agreed, and the motion carried.

Nominations were opened for Vice-Chair of the Franklin Township Agriculture Advisory Committee for 2021. Rik Johnson nominated Cathy Blumig, which was seconded by Al Puchalek. All agreed and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Cathy Blumig made a motion to open the meeting to the Public, which was seconded by Rik Johnson. All agreed and the meeting was opened for public comment and questions.

Ray Snyder, owner and operator of Snyder Farm on Middlebush Road, addressed concerns he has about the State of New Jersey allowing hunters on nearby Six-Mile Run property in close proximity to land he leases from the State. According to the lease, Mr. Snyder is not allowed to remove trespassers from the leased property, which causes interruption and potential liability.

Chairman Puskas agreed with Mr. Snyder on the issues related to hunters trespassing on leased farmland from the State. In addition to the mapping be confusing for those that are permitted to hunt, there is only one Patrol Ranger for all 3,000 acres of Six-Mile Run.

Mr. Snyder ended his comments by stating that he would be in favor of the Township managing the leased farm properties owned by the State. His opinion is that the hunting and farming operations would

coordinate more efficiently and that day-to-day management needs could be more easily addressed under the Township's supervision.

#### APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Rik Johnson made a motion to approve the December 2020 minutes, which was seconded by Al Puchalek. All agreed and the motion carried.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### ***Updates to Hunting Mapping***

Tara Kenyon discussed the updating of the hunting area maps with the Committee. She has been working with the GIS Specialist at the Township to create uniform mapping templates for all hunting areas, confirm the correct property boundaries and hunting area boundaries, and identify parking where available. Tara presented a draft map of the Negri-Nepote site for the Committee's review. She will continue to work on these maps and will present the final drafts to the Committee in March/April 2021. All maps will be complete prior to the distribution of Hunting Permit Applications for the 2021-2022 season.

##### ***Resolution for Municipal PIG Program (from Municipal Governing Body)***

The State Agriculture Development Committee has added a new requirement that the Annual Municipal Planning Incentive Grant (MuniPIG) must be accompanied with a resolution of approval from the Township Council. The MuniPIG is due on December 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. For 2021, the resolution can be sent after the submission of the Annual Application.

Tara Kenyon presented the draft resolution to the Committee for feedback. This resolution, which states that the AAC continues to be active, has participated in review of the Annual Application, and has furnished the Council with a copy of said Application, will be forwarded to the Township Council for approval in the upcoming weeks.

##### ***Update on Prescribed Burn at Griggstown (news today – 1/7)***

Tara stated that she spoke with George Efinger, Area Steward for the New Jersey Forest Fire Service, today regarding the Prescribed Burn at John Clyde Native Grasslands Preserve. Mr. Efinger reported that the application has been approved, and that the NJFSS is beginning to prepare the property. Once a suitable weather condition is predicted, the NJFSS will arrange their Staff and begin the required notification. Tara has also updated the Township's website with information explaining the process, benefits, areas to be burned and anticipated timeframe. DPW has also created two large, aluminum signs that explain the Prescribed Burn and notify visitors that the area will be closed during burning.

#### OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed at this meeting.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

Rik Johnson made a motion to enter into Executive Session so the Committee could discuss property negotiations related to farmland preservation. The motion was seconded by Cathy Blumig. All agreed and the motion carried.

Al Puchalek made a motion to close the Executive Session portion of the meeting, which was seconded by Cathy Blumig. All agreed and the motion was opened back up to adjourn.

***NOTE – As no official action will be taken following Executive Session, the public meeting will close immediately afterwards.***

#### ADJOURNMENT

Rik Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Al Puchalek. All agreed, and the meeting adjourned at 9:05PM.