



**MINUTES OF THE FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

June 2, 2022

8:00PM

Franklin Township Municipal Building
475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, NJ 08873
Community Development Conference Room (1st Floor)

PRESENT

Al Puchalek

Craig Feibel

Rik Johnson

Michael Peacos

Councilmember Ed Potosnak

Tara Kenyon, AICP/PP – 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 8:04pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment was not held because there were no members of the public present.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 3, 2022

Craig Feibel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 3, 2022, which was seconded by Al Puchalek. All agreed and the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Farmland Preservation Event

The Committee discussed holding an in-person event to encourage farmers and landowners of eligible properties to preserve their land as farmland. Targeted farms from our Municipal Farmland Preservation Plan will be sent invitations in the mail, and the event will also be posted online.

The Committee chose the date of July 27th at 7:00pm. The library is the preferred location. Tara will look into reserving this space. She will also draft an invitation for mail and posting.

Soil Protection Standards – Draft Rules released April 28, 2022

Tara provided a summary of the recently revised Soil Protection Standards, presented by the State Agriculture Development Committee on April 28, 2022. The updates include:

- Increase in the allowable disturbance to 12% or 4 acres (whichever is greater)
- Waiver allowances for up to 15% disturbance (SADC approval required)
- More diverse categorization of permitted activities

- Rehabilitation program where disturbed lands can be returned to undisturbed lands
Tara will provide the Committee with updates regarding the Soil Protection Standards as they become available.

Summary of Solar Bills

Tara provided updates on the Grid Supply Bill (S-2605) and the Dual Use Bill (S-3484). These Bills provide allowances for energy generation projects on preserved farms and require the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to consult with the Secretary of Agriculture. These Bills also limit the location of solar projects to portions of the land that are not prime agricultural soils.

OLD BUSINESS

Summary of Deer Management Program

There has still been very little response to the required hunter summary reports. Without the data, a complete analysis of the Hunting Program cannot be compiled. Tara will send a final email warning to all hunters to get the required responses.

Local Health Assessment Technical Assistance Grant

The Steering Committee had its first meeting on May 30, 2022. Tara and Saffie Kallon presented the entire project to the Steering Committee members and the next steps were discussed. Tara and Saffie are currently working on a survey that can be distributed to the public to assess perceived and real health conditions and access to preventative health in Franklin Township. Over the next few months, focus groups will be held to obtain this subjective data, which will be coupled with data from the County Health Department, the Robert Wood Johnson network, Franklin Township schools, Census data, planning and zoning data, and more. Once this phase is complete, a Community Health Profile can be developed, which will lead to the drafting of the Local Health Assessment and Action Plan.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was not held.

ADJOURNMENT

Rik Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Michael Peacos. All agreed and the meeting was adjourned at 9:11pm.