



AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

July 7, 2022

8:00PM

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

Present:

Cathy Blumig

Craig Feibel

Al Puchalek

Rik Johnson

Michael Peacos

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)

8:05pm

PUBLIC COMMENT

As there were no members of the public present, Public Comment period was not held.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 2, 2022

Rik Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2022 Agriculture Advisory Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Al Puchalek. All agreed, except for Cathy Blumig who abstained from the vote. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Farmland Preservation Event

Tara will create a PowerPoint presentation about Farmland Preservation for the Meet and Greet, scheduled for July 27, 2022 at 6:30pm at the Municipal Complex (Council Chambers). The flyer has been posted on the website and Township's social media, and copies have been directly mailed to all landowners of Targeted Farms.

Hunting Program (2022 – 2023)

The Summary of 2021-2022 Hunting Program was still somewhat incomplete as of June's AAC meeting because many Hunter Summaries are still not received. Tara Kenyon sent an email to all hunters who did not submit a Hunter Summary reminding them that their hunting spots are not guaranteed without this submittal. This did lead to a number of Hunter Summaries being submitted.

In total, 125 deer were culled during the 2021/2022 Season, with the majority being culled during Season 1 (September 11, 2021 – October 29, 2021). 166 permits were provided. The complete report will be posted online.

The Franklin Township Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) received a presentation from the New Jersey Animal Protection League regarding non-fatal deer management strategies at its June 21, 2022 meeting. This organization seeks to manage the deer population without hunting and has urged the Township to look into these strategies for potential implementation.

Soil Protection Standards – Draft Rules released April 28, 2022

The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) released its draft Soil Protection Standards to stakeholders (not the New Jersey Public Register) on April 28, 2022. The updated rules include feedback from stakeholders on the last iteration of the rules, and include changes such as:

- Increasing the allowable amount of disturbance acreage (from 8% to 12%)
- Increasing the allowable amount of disturbance beyond 12% to 15% for properties that obtain waivers
- Collapsing some of the Best Management Practices
- Developing standards for rehabilitation so that previously disturbed acres can be removed from the calculations

Tara will keep an eye on the release of the final version of the Soil Protection Standards to the New Jersey Register so the AAC can submit written comment.

OLD BUSINESS

Local Health Assessment Technical Assistance Grant

The Local Health Assessment survey has been posted online. Responses are coming in daily, which will provide subjective feedback about health conditions and equity across the Township. Tara continues to collect the hard data needed to complete the Assessment itself. The Steering Committee will meet in late August or early September to discuss preliminary findings, and to discuss the hosting of smaller focus groups.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Cathy Blumig made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss potential property negotiations, which was seconded by Rik Johnson. All agreed, and the AAC entered Executive Session. No other official business besides adjournment will take place after Executive Session.

Cathy Blumig made a motion to exit Executive Session to discuss potential property negotiations, which was seconded by Al Puchalek. All agreed, and the AAC exited Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Cathy Blumig made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Michael Peacos. All agreed, and the AAC adjourned its meeting at 9:10pm.

The next meeting of the AAC is scheduled for Thursday August 4, 2022 at 8PM.