



**MINUTES OF**  
**FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP'S AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

September 5, 2024

8:00PM

Franklin Township Municipal Building  
475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, NJ 08873  
Large Conference Room (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)

<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Bob Puskas, Chair	Craig Feibel
Cathy Blumig, Vice-Chair	Councilmember Ed Potosnak – Council Liaison
Al Puchalek	
Rik Johnson	
Bryan Herman	
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)**

Chairman Bob Puskas called the meeting to order at 8:05pm.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

As no members of the public were present, a Public Comment session was not held.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 4, 2024**

Cathy Blumig made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 4<sup>th</sup>, which was seconded by Rik Johnson. All agreed, and the motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

***Updated Soil Protection Standards***

Tara Kenyon updated the Committee on the most recent version of the Soil Protection Standards prepared by the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC). Based on comments received from municipalities, counties, non-profit entities, and agriculture-based organizations across the State on the last version of the Soil Protection Standards, the following changes were made:

1. The maximum soil disturbance allowance (12% or 4 acres, whichever is greater) will no longer apply to farms preserved prior to the anticipated adoption of these rules (October 1, 2024). Only new disturbance will be counted towards farms that are grandfathered into these rules.

2. The waiver process has been streamlined. Farmers are no longer required to complete the notification process – this responsibility has been shifted to municipalities. Most importantly, farmers will not have to prove that there is “no feasible alternative”, which typically includes the professional work of a licensed engineer.
3. In the previous version, “ball and burlap” practices were not addressed. The most recent iteration refers to this agricultural practice as “dug nursery stock” and has added it to the list of exempt soil disturbances.

The comment period ends on September 13<sup>th</sup>. The Franklin AAC has no additional comments to provide to the SADC.

### *2024-2025 Deer Management Program*

Tara updated the Committee that the application period for the Franklin Township Deer Management Program has ended, and the lottery was held. The Clerk’s Office Staff is working on preparing the permit packages and mailing them out to hunters. The hunting season begins on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> and ends on Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>.

### *90-Day Notification Letter to SADC for Municipal Planning Incentive Grant*

Tara has prepared the required 90-Day Notification Letter demonstrating the Township’s intent to apply for the annual Municipal Planning Incentive Grant to the SADC and Somerset County Agriculture Development Board and will submit by the deadline of September 15<sup>th</sup>. The complete Annual Application is due on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

### *Other Business*

Cathy Blumig added that the annual “Ag in Action” is being held on Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup> from 10am – 2pm at the Carnevale Farm in Hillsborough. Later that same day (7pm) at the same place (Carnevale Farm), the Somerset County Board of Agriculture is hosting the Annual Thomas Everett Memorial Scholarship Dinner.

### OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business to discuss at this meeting.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session held as part of this meeting.

### ADJOURNMENT

Cathy Blumig made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Bryan Herman. All agreed, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:41 pm.

***The next meeting of the Franklin Township Agriculture Advisory Committee is scheduled for Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8:00pm at the Franklin Township Municipal Building (Large Conference Room).***

