

Meeting of the Cape May County Agriculture Development Board

Monday, January 25th, 2022 - via Teleconference

Board Members in Attendance:

Matt Stiles

Bob Schumann

George Brewer

Sue Ann Wheeler

Al Natali

Staff:

Scott Mullen

Leslie Gimeno

Lauren Purdom

Jeff Lindsay

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:06 pm.

Statement Pertaining to the Open Public Meetings Act: Mr. Stiles read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement.

Roll Call: A Roll Call found the following members to be in attendance: Brewer, Wheeler, Natali, Stiles, Schumann.

Moment of Silence: Mr. Mullen asked for a moment of silence for reflection on the passing of long-time Board member, Les Rea.

Approval of Minutes of 10/14/21 Meeting: Mr. Mullen indicated that the minutes of the 10/14/21 meeting had been distributed to the Board members. There were no questions or comments. Mr. Natali made a motion to approve the minutes, as written. Ms. Wheeler seconded the motion. A roll call vote found all members to be in favor, with the exception of Mr. Brewer, who abstained.

Chairman's Report: Mr. Stiles did not have a Chairman's Report

Correspondence: None

Financial Statement: Mr. Mullen reviewed the Financial Report indicating that the available fund balance after encumbrances (Schedule A) and Recommendations (Schedule B) is \$11,119,313.76.

Agricultural Labor Unit Discussion and Process: Mr. Mullen said that there had recently been interest expressed in the construction of Ag Labor Units on a preserved farm in the County. Since at the present

time there is no formal process established to review these requests, Mr. Mullen said that he and Mr. Lindsay had worked with the SADC to model one after their process. He briefly reviewed the form that had been distributed to CADB Members and indicated that the Ag Labor Unit issue is NOT covered under Right to Farm. He indicated that the requirement for CADB approval of Ag Labor Units is contained within the deeds of easements for preserved properties.

Mr. Brewer asked if the farms would need to have local building codes and other approvals as part of their process. Mr. Mullen said yes, all local approvals would be necessary. He indicated that the CADB would be looking at any such requests from the perspective of being the stewards of the preserved farms. Any applicants looking to construct such units would need the approval of the CADB to do so; an application and presentation to the CADB are part of the process. In response to several questions regarding the parameters under which the CADB would approve the construction of units, Mr. Mullen said that setting the conditions would be part of the approval process and findings would be documented in the CADB resolutions. He said that he had been in conversations with the SADC to see if they had any guidance or advice on issues such as formulas for # of units per acre, but the SADC said that it is up to the CADB to determine what is reasonable and/or necessary based on the specifics of each individual farm.

Mr. Schumann expressed concern regarding the use of the Labor Units and their inhabitation by individuals other than those directly employed on the farm. Mr. Mullen said that those concerns would be addressed through the application process and that State regulations specifically address that issue stating that those living in the Labor Units must be employees who work directly on the farm or its products. He clarified that there would be future discussion and that tonight he was looking to have the Board approve the application form so that a process for accepting applications would be put in place.

Mr. Brewer made a motion to approve the Cape May County Labor Unit Housing Application, as presented. Mr. Schumann seconded the motion. A roll call vote found all members to be in favor.

Update on Farmland Comprehensive Plan: Mr. Mullen provided a brief overview of the Comprehensive Farmland Plan project. He indicated that he had spoken to the consultant at Heyer & Gruel Associates and that a draft plan will be forthcoming soon. He said that when received, he would forward it to the CADB for review and comments, with a final version being presented for adoption prior to the SADC's deadline of May, 2022.

Public Comment: Michael Kempf indicated that he is now the liaison to the CADB for the Soil Conservation District. Amy Mandelbaum from the SADC introduced herself as the Cape May County Area Representative and said that she looks forward to working the CADB to preserve farms using the County's \$1.7m base grant and the additional \$4m in competitive grant funds. She indicated that the next several meetings of the SADC will be held virtually and invited all to participate.

There were no further public comments.

Motion for Adjournment: At 5:36, Mr. Brewer made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Natali seconded the motion. All in favor.

Mr. Mullen thanked everyone for their participation.