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CAPE MAY COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
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            William E. Sturm Administration Building
 2
                   Commissioners Meeting Room
                          4 Moore Road
 3
             Cape May Court House, New Jersey 08210
                         March 31, 2022
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    MEMBERS PRESENT:
 6
    James P. Hand
7
    Robert Schumann
    Matthew P. Stiles
    Sue Ann Wheeler
    Alfred Natali
    John Batastini, Esq., Board Attorney
10
    APPEARANCES:
11
    RICHARD M. KING, JR., ESQ. (Law Office of Richard M.
12
    King, Jr.)
    Attorney for Objectors
13
    FRANK CORRADO, ESQ.
14
    Attorney for Upper Township
15
    COLIN BELL, ESQ.
    Attorneys for Applicants
16
    MICHAEL KENT, Cape Atlantic Conservatio District
17
18
19
20
21
                 Transcriber Jennifer Wilson, AD/T 623
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                 CSR REPORTING
23
                 1125 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 543
24
                 Atlantic City, NJ 08401
25
                 (609) 345-8448, (609) 345-8998 (Fax)
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1
                              I N D E X
2
                            (03/31/2022)
 3
 4
                                                      Page(s)
5
 6
    APPLICATION:
7
    Ocean City Winery
    Engine ONE Vineyards, LLC
8
    Block 723, Lot 37, 5.208 acres
9
10
    8 Bayaire Road, Upper Township
11
    Cape May County
    FOR: Site specific agriculture management
12
13
    practice
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15
    OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT
                                                           8
16
17
         Notice Issue
    RE:
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18
          By Mr. Batastini
19
                                                     9,23,30
          By Mr. King
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          Mr. Frank Corrado
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          Mr. Colin Bell
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(On record at 11:31:26 a.m.)

(Not near microphones first 3 seconds)

MR. BATASTINI: First of all I want to apologize to everybody. There's been some recent communications (inaudible) a problem we need to resolve first so that we can provide the opportunity for all parties to obviously be heard.

As for members of the Board, I apologize for the delay. The issue has become one of notice. The first issue that came up on your notice you will see that there is a list that comes from the Upper Township.

And the Upper Township had provided us alist where on the top it says Lot 42, but our lot is 36. So when we initially took a look at that -- I'm sorry thirty --

MR. BELL: 37.

MR. BATASTINI: 37. When we initially looked at the list and saw that potentially was for a completely different lot, that would jeopardize a lot of the notice. As it turns out, the certified list was actually correct in the people that were notified. It was a clerical error on top that they should have put Lot 37 instead of Lot 42.

So that took a while for us to kind of go through, because we were looking at stuff and we reached out to Upper Township and Upper Township acknowledged all of

what I just told you.

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So the lot itself is 37 and it has properly issued or properly noticed pursuant to the list.

So that's the first thing. The second thing that has come up, and I'm only going to give the attorneys for the objectors as well as the Applicant an opportunity to explain their position. As you can see there is an easement that runs through lot 36. 36 is the piece of property that runs partially also from Route 9 and there was -- initially they were going to use Lot 36, part and parcel to the entrance.

There has been some discussion as to whether, since you're going to be using Lot 36 as a potential access, whether or not Route -- the people that are on -- within 200 feet of 36 should have been noticed within the 200 foot letter.

It was determined that they should have been. The next question that comes up, the next legal issue that comes up is whether or not this Board has jurisdiction to hear the application at all. And if the Lot 36 is part and parcel to the application, and you'll hear both sides. One of the Applicant's is going to say it's not necessary. The Objector is going to say it is necessary.

What that would do is if it -- if this Board

determined that it's not necessary, we can continue through. If this Board determines that the notice should have been for Lot 36 as well, there is potential that everything that we did up until this date, the Board would have jurisdiction to do and the Applicants would have to start all over again with the proper notice.

So you're going to hear a couple of what I would say pre-application arguments, because I want you to hear from them, you know, what their argument is in terms of the notice provisions. This is sort of an area of the law that is somewhat complicated and the bigger issue is that this all came up probably in the last 24 hours.

So at this point, I'm going to ask the Board, first of all, do you have any questions about what you -- I've just said? And you probably do, you probably don't, I don't know. But I just wanted to pole the Board first. What's your initial response?

MR. HAND: Is it legal to go ahead without those - can we determine whether it's legal or not to
continue with the proceedings without those people's
notice to be here? It is or isn't?

MR. BATASTINI: Unfortunately it's a little bit of a gray area in the law. You're going to hear both

sides of an argument, but in terms of actually making a decision, the ultimate decision, is the triers of fact and the trier of law. It will be up to you to ultimately make that decision. I'll have my own opinion, you know, after we hear from the Applicant as well as the Objectors as to the notice issues.

MR. SCHUMANN: Okay. What kind of easement is it?

Is it like electrical?

MR. BATASTINI: It's an access easement. So if you look at the plans that were provided, the site plan shows that they're going to use a portion of Lot 36 to access, kind of make a, you know, the access point at one of those couple of trees. So they wanted to utilize that lot 37. So 36 would be part and parcel to an access -- access of the property. So it would be 36 and 37, but 36 was not part of the application and it wasn't noticed.

Then there's a whole issue of, you know, if it's not part of the application, you know, the Applicant is most likely going to be on their own with Upper Township in determining whether or not they can have to zoning rights to be able to utilize that as a commercial, potentially a commercial access driveway.

So you may hear testimony from the Applicant who may very well say we're not going to utilize that

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easement at all. The you're going to hear some
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2
    argument back which on notice, we'll you can't just
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    take out and revise the plan, because the public
    doesn't have the opportunity to review the revised
5
    plan.
         That's what you're going to hear.
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         So anything? The owner of lot 36 is not part of
8
    this proceeding. He's actually --
         MR. BELL: He's actually --
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10
                          The Applicant purchased different
         MR. BATASTINI:
11
    -- the Applicant actually owns Lot 36.
         MR. NATALI:
12
                      Oh.
13
         MR. BATASTINI: So the easement is essentially,
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    you know, between two parties, but, you know, they are
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    -- the Applicant and the owner is, you know, Engine One
16
    Ocean City Winery.
                         They are two separate individuals.
17
    Although --
18
                        They are, but they're not.
         MR. SCHUMANN:
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         MR. BATASTINI:
                          They are, but they're not.
                                                      For
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    legal reasons, they're two separate entities.
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         MR. NATALI: So in one case the LLC owns and in
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    the other case, an individual owns it?
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         MR. BATASTINI:
                          That is correct.
24
                    (Speaker away from microphone)
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                        That's not -- my clients have no
         UNIDENTIFIED:
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problem, really.
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2
         MR. BATASTINI:
                         Well then, they own both options
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    in their own names. But one of them's not included.
         MR. CORRADO:
                       John, why don't we just swear in the
5
    parties and --
6
         MR. BATASTINI:
                        Okay.
         MR. CORRADO: -- and let them explain to the Board
8
    what the arguments of the parties might be. It might
    make more sense for the parties to present their
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10
    arguments to the Board.
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         MR. BATASTINI: Understood. I just wanted to give
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    them a little eyes up, so they're not (inaudible).
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         MR. BATASTINI: So --
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         UNIDENTIFIED:
                        Yes.
15
         UNIDENTIFIED:
                       Believe it or not, this is our
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    objection legally.
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         MR. STILES: Should I read this open meeting.
         MR. BATASTINI: Yes, we've got to do that.
18
    (Inaudible) do it.
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20
    OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT
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         MR. STILES: This is a notice pursuant to the
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    requirements of the Open Meeting Act that at least 48
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    hours of advance notice of this meeting has been
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    provided by delivering the same in writing to the Clerk
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    of the Board of the Chosen Freeholders to be posted on
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the bulletin board and delivering a copy of the notice
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2
    to the Cape May County Herald.
 3
         Okay.
         MS. ERNST: Roll call.
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5
                    (Not near microphone)
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         MS. ERNST:
                      James Hand?
         MR. HAND:
                     Here.
8
         MS. ERNST: Mr. Natali?
         MR. NATALI: Here.
9
10
         MS. ERNST:
                      Matthew Stiles?
11
         MR. STILES:
                      Here.
12
         MS. ERNST:
                      Sue Wheeler?
13
         MS. WHEELER: Here.
14
         MS. ERNST: Robert Schumann?
15
         MR. SCHUMANN: Here.
16
         MR. STILES:
                      That was good?
17
         UNIDENTIFIED:
                         Yeah.
18
         MR. STILES: Okay. Mr. King?
         MR. KING:
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                    Does this microphone work or is it kind
20
               I don't know. Someone correct me if it's
    for show?
21
    off.
22
         My name is Richard King, I am an attorney.
                                                       I have
23
    an office both in Somers Point and in Cape May.
24
    represent several of the property owners who are
25
    concerned about the proposal. That's why I'm speaking
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on their behalf.

Also here today is Mr. Frank Corrado, he's the attorney for Upper Township freshly appointed to address this matter. I do not speak for him, but I do know that he shares the concerns I'm going to express to you regarding the issue of notice.

Notice is a critical issue in any application before the Board for what we call jurisdictional. If the notice is defective, even if it's determined later to be defective, everything starts over, the process of the Board and you have to do it again. So it's not something that can be fixed later, it's jurisdictional.

So in order to get it right, because if you don't get it right, what can happen as, as you move forward, because from here then you go to the State and a whole series of appeals and processes. If the Division determines that the notice is defective, everything has to go all over again. Everybody has to go through the expense again, all the testimony, the experts and it becomes -- it could be two or three years later. So it's very cumbersome. So it's important to get the service right.

I am the attorney for at least two boards and attorney for probably 100 boards over the years and it's the one thing you don't want to get wrong. So you

-- in my experience, you act prudent on the issue of notice. It's not that it's un-fixable, you just do the notice again, you do the hearings again.

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In this instance, it's somewhat unique because you've already had half of the hearing on it, so if the notice is defective, you'd have to do it over again.

That's rather good, whether than doing it two or three years from now.

I'm going to share with you now why I think the notice is defective in this case.

This winery that's proposed is a commercial process, a commercial entity. It sells wine to people and send them out on the road. That's where it's going to go. The way it's going to do that, under the plan that is submitted, and I want to begin with the plan. The plan is what everyone bases their presentation on but the public decides whether or not to appear to speak for or against the project.

So that's why the plans are required to be on record 10 days before the hearing. The plan that you have in front of you, I believe it's dated May 21st. I could be mistaken, but that's from memory. But I emailed earlier this week to make sure that was the plan. The plan that you have in front of you, that you had in front of you last time, is the plan that they're

referencing and that's the plan that people rely on, on whether or not to come out and speak. That's the plan that my professionals relied upon. It's the plan for analysis for today.

While reviewing this plan, we realized that one of the things this winery was proposing is to cross a residential lot. And it doesn't matter who owns that lot, the point is that it's a residential zone lot on the map. Half of their entranceway on to the land will be on Lot 36. Okay? But Lot 36 is not part of the lot that is the farm. It's the lot that they're going to use for the farm. They're going to put commercial traffic across this residential lot.

That's a big deal, both in terms of zoning and in terms of notice. In terms of zoning, we'll get to that at another time, but this Board does not deal with zoning issues on residential lots that aren't on the proposed property in the sense that they're going to need a variance for that. My experts will discuss that later.

But for now we're focusing on notice. And there is a case, and I followed this case in the Appellate Division myself. This case (inaudible) is Brower vs. Planning Board. And what Brower vs. Planning Board says is that when you have a property, even though

construction isn't taking place on one property, if you have an access easement across another property, that property becomes part of the main property. And you have to give notice not just for the main property, but for all the properties that are being used for that property.

And at the end of that case it says:

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"Common sense interpretation of the code dictates that the lots traversed by the roadway became part of the property that was determined at the Board hearing."

In fact Cox -- Cox is about a hearing for zoning that we all rely on. It's in the Bible of zoning law. Cox says, and it's quoted in my letter to you, its solicitor notes that:

"Property known as the subject of the hearing includes property not owned by the applicant over which he has an easement for use of access to the development."

Understand that when they say "not owned", they usually mean it's rare that the owner owns both. What they're talking about there, you have an easement across a property to use another property, you have to give notice to both properties. That's why the Court called it common sense. It's common sense because the epicenter for the notice if everywhere that they're

using the commercial use. Okay?

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So that's why Lot 36 is important. I'd also point out that the notice that was published did not mention Lot 36. It only mentioned Lot 37. So there's at least two things wrong. The published notice doesn't mention Lot 36 and the 200 foot list for the notice around it doesn't start with Lot 36, it only starts with Lot 37. That's defective notice and that's the process and that's what the cases said.

Now there is some indication that the Farm Act does reference, instead of using the term "subject property" like they did in the MLU Act, they replace it with commercial farm. But that doesn't change the law. And the very next sentence in the Farm Act references the MLU Act, which is everybody uses in zoning for notice. So it's obviously tracking the MLU Act. And just because they changed the word "commercial farm" from "subject property", the common sense still applies. If you're going across another lot, then you have to give notice from that lot. That's the law.

And even if you're not absolutely certain that that's the law, it's the prudent thing to do it right and not do this again two or three years from now.

And there's another issue that may arise.

MR. BATASTINI: (Inaudible - not near microphone).

MR. KING: (Reading document). You're right.

2:76-248, subsection C, and it says "the owners of all real property on the current tax duplicates in all directions of the property upon which the commercial farm is located. The commercial farm shall be solely responsible to pay for and certify with the property owner, in accordance with NJSA 30:55(b-12)."

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NJSA 30:55(b), is -- and I realize this, is the Land Use Law and all that they've really done is change the word "separate" -- the word "separate", the subject property, subject on the application to "commercial farm".

But that doesn't change the common sense in the case I just read you. So obviously if they're going to put this commercial farm across Lot 36, you've got to give notice on Lot 36.

Now I have been advised, at least in theory, that the owners' cure this, what I consider a fairly obvious notice defect, they intend to remove the easement, remove -- to shape the route of the access road to get off of Lot 36, so that you'd be entering Route 9, the state road, with only a 20 foot wide access road. That is not the plan that's before you. That is not the plan that's been filed within 10 days, 10 days in advance of the meeting. And that's not the plan that

we are obligated to respond to.

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And that is a material change. You're eliminating a lot and you're taking the main access on to Route 9 and cutting it in half to 20 feet. That is an important engineering change. It's an important zoning change. And it's not the plan that's before you.

So if they wish to make that argument on another day with proper notice and a properly filed plan, then we'd be glad to address that and I can have my engineers and the planners and your professionals can address that issue. It's a very different thing putting a 20 foot wide entrance off of Route 9 and removing it from Lot 36.

The simplest way to understand the significance of that is if you had looked at this plan two weeks ago on file as it is required to be and you saw that was a 20 foot wide entrance on to Route 9 and you thought that was safe, you wouldn't have come here tonight. You would say, well, 20 feet, it's going to be that easement, I don't need to appear.

And now tonight, they suddenly change the plan, eliminate and put a 20 foot entranceway on to Route 9. So that's going to cross the street that leads to your school. People care about this intersection and they care about this access road and to change that is

material.

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So I'm urging you to do the prudent thing and require them to re-notice properly and let them decide. And think about this, they gave you this plan for a reason. They thought this was a safer, better plan apparently in their mind. And now in order to salvage an error on notice, they're going to change that plan to something that they've already told you is, by definition, less safe than the one they wanted to do.

That's a material change. So don't let them do that. Require a proper notice, properly published, a proper full plan to set before you and then have the hearing. We're not saying they can never come before you, we're saying they have to do it right. That's what we're asking for tonight. Okay?

Thank you. That's our presentation. Mr. Corrado, anything?

MR. CORRADO: As he said, I'm Frank Corrado. I'm special counsel for Upper Township in this matter. And I've been retained to put the Township's position before the Board.

We basically join with the neighbors in their opposition to this project and I join Mr. King's argument on notice.

I just want to make sure that (Mr. Corrado leaves

microphone) I just want to make sure everyone understand this is Lot 36, this is Lot 37. The driveway, as you can see, is the sole access. And remember this plan contemplates that this is the sole access to the property. They're going to come across Lot 37 as well as Lot 36. And this is a plan that happens to give an easement to themselves for a lot that is not part of the commercial farm.

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So that if they want approval of this driveway as a -- as is designated on this plan, they would have to go to the Upper Township Zoning Board and get approval to run a commercial driveway across and into the lot.

If they move it, so that it is only on Lot 37, then it's narrower. We don't know exactly what the change will be. You can't make that kind of a change, like Mr. King said. That is a material change to the plan. You're changing the sole -- the principal and sole access to the lot in a way that reduces the width and impacts on how it intersects with Route 9 and the surrounding properties and also reduces buffers to its main property.

So it's a big deal to make that change. So, you know, if the Board decides that Lot 36 should have been in the notice, which it should, because obviously Lot 36 is part of this plan. If they move, then they're

submitted a new plan and they have make re-submissions of that plan.

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So, as my psychology professor used to say in college, they put themselves in a double bind. If they go forward with the plan as presented -- as presented here, they must notice for both lots, so they have to re-do the notice and go through the process again.

If they change the plan to move the driveway over to only Lot 37, then they've got to submit a new plan. Either way, this Board can't hear the application tonight. Thank you.

MR. BATASTINI: Mr. Corrado and Mr. King, one of the things that I think has been discussed is how far back in your mind and your arguments so that the Board can hear it, how far back does the notice go in the jurisdictional question? Does it go -- is it your position that it's going to all the way back to the original --

MR. CORRADO: It goes back to the hearing on whether this is defined as a commercial farm on not? They gave notice -- you know, the notice for that hearing was only for Lot 37, so it's my position, as I believe is the position of Mr. King, that the initial hearing has to be redone. Well, I too, say the initial hearing, but both questions have to be re-determined, I

think we know that.

MR. KING: I did go back and look, I checked, and I think it came as 41,51, and 71 in the transcript, the discussion of the access on to Route 9 based upon this very plan. So that presentation would resolve (inaudible).

MR. BELL: Good morning everybody. Colin Bell and I represent the Applicants. So I will tell you, first of all, the issue with the finger roll lot, we resolved that. That was Upper Township's clerical issue, they admit that to us. It was a mistake. No big deal, the right people for lot 37 got the notice.

Now this is not a Zoning and Land Use Board. You heard a lot about what the zoning and land use laws requires. This is commercial. This is to say, County Ag Culture Development Board, has it's own rules. The regulation that we talked about says give 200 feet notice to all property within 200 feet of the commercial farm.

There's only one commercial farm here. And that's for you to decide if it was commercial (inaudible) for 37. 36 is not a commercial farm. And in fact the argument has been, it's actually been a little counter logical, I don't know if that's the right word.

25 | They're saying 36 isn't a commercial farm, so you need

to get zoning approval for that. You can't grant the approval for it, but they should have given notice to it for the hearing today before you, the Board, we can't get the relief that the Applicants want. And that's the argument.

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It doesn't make any sense. So this is what the regulation provides. Again, with notice to all properties within 200 feet of the commercial farm. That's the commercial farm. And importantly, we have to go back, you know they say so now this invalidates everything.

Even if you were to decide that 36 should have been noticed and it's our position it shouldn't, because there's only one commercial farm here and that's what you certified as a commercial farm back in October.

You've got to read the regulation from the beginning. They started at C. You've got to read A and B first. A and B. A says this is the -- this is the procedures. B says, the procedures set forth in this section shall apply only after -- only after the County Agriculture Development Board determines it has jurisdiction to hear the right to farm case. And you get jurisdiction when you determine it's a commercial farm.

In other words, I didn't have to do it. You got 200 foot notice, you've got a commercial farm certification. We did it last time, because we were going for commercial farm certification and the SSAMP all at the same time. These notice requirements talk about this is the notice that you get when you apply for SSAMP. Procedures applicable to request for or by a commercial farm or site specific agricultural management practice shall be as follows. And then it goes written notice to everyone within 200 feet of the commercial farm.

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So even if, for the sake of argument, you were to think 36 has to be noticed for today, it invalidates nothing you did last time. That notice requirement only kicks in after you determine it's a commercial farm, which is the jurisdictional requirement for you to even consider an SSAMP. That's why I had to do that first. But we provided all that notice last time, because we thought we would do it all at once.

Remember it goes back, we tried to negotiate and make some changes, which we did.

Now, let's talk about this. I mean, they're right, this plan has an easement for Lot 36, which my clients own. We don't have to go over Lot 36. We moved it, because the neighbors didn't want the traffic

right next to them. Okay. We can shift over a little bit. We don't need to. This covers the farm lot, it runs all the way around that.

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This entrance is a State highway, one of the conditions of approval that we asked for before and the same again is this is going to have to be approved by NJDOT no matter what the entrance may look like.

So we can go forward with this plan today. You can -- you can grant -- you can grant the SSAMP. If my clients have to go and get an easement for that and get permission from Upper Township to go over that entrance, that's what I'm going to have to do. Maybe they'll come back and ask permission to move it over in the future. We wouldn't have to notice again, we're already here. We let everybody know that that's what we're coming back to do.

But either way, there's no impediment to moving forward today with your consideration of an SSAMP for Lot 37, which is the only commercial farm at issue here and the only lot over which this Board could grant relief.

UNIDENTIFIED: (Not near microphone).

MR. KING: My personal opinion, I believe the Applicant is trying to talk itself into a bad thing. I appreciate that they, you know, there's been a mistake

made and they want to try to go forward and overcome it. I think in the long run it's not good for the Applicant or the Board or for the people here who risk having to do it all over again based upon that well stated, and in my opinion, a persuasive argument.

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The Municipal Land Use Law is the guideline for how to do hearings on land issues. The section that I cited specifically references the Municipal Land Use Law in the very next sentence. I've read you the only case that you've heard tonight, the only legal precedent on the issue and incidentally, it happens to make sense if you're going to go across another lot, you have to give notice from that lot. The case is indistinguishable. It's an easement across another lot and it's defective, they didn't give that notice.

I understand the new format. They went in and they changed some words, because it had the word "subject property", the property the subject of the application, in the Municipal Land Use Law and in the Farm Act they put in the words "commercial farm" because they deal with commercial farms. That doesn't change the common sense if you're going to take the commercial farm and bring traffic across another lot, you have to give notice from that lot.

Suppose that lot does happen to be more than 20

feet from the main body of the property, you would have a road -- an access exists running next door to a house that didn't get notice. It's ridiculous. It's not the law. Don't be persuaded by that.

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With regard to an announcement to make, if that doesn't work, I do announcements all the time. I do them two or three times a month for the zoning boards. I'm going to announce a new hearing, it's because there's already been proper notice for the hearing you're at. So you can say you're here tonight and go to the next meeting. If it's not proper notice, you don't just announce it, you have to give a proper notice.

Don't let them change the plan? Why? Allowing error to have you consider a plan that by definition is not safe. Not -- meaning if the other plan doesn't get approved, then why suddenly change this and do something different tonight. That's not fair to anyone. And it's imprudent. Your ultimate goal is the safety of the citizens and the health and safety of the people who talked about this project. And you go to cure a notice defect and start moving property along Route 9 making it half the width they're supposed to be. That's not what you do, you don't change a plan like that in the middle. It's imprudent. Thank you.

MR. BELL: (Not near microphone at first). -this issue was raised at 9:53 a.m. this morning for the
very first time, despite the fact that, you know, this
has been on file for however it's been on, it was
published in the newspaper (inaudible).

MR. BATASTINI: One of the questions first and then if -- and I guess I need to make it a little bit more clear. Is it your determination to remove the easement and the access or what have you decided to do with that?

(Several talking same time)

MR. BELL: I talked to my client, Rich.

If you had raised it before 10:00 a.m. this morning, I would have had a ready answer. No, we think it's not a material change, so there's no issues with Lot 36.

We'll move it and proceed only with the access on Lot 37. So (inaudible) NJDOT.

MR. BATASTINI: So now, one of the questions before this Board is whether or not the change that we heard from Mr. Corrado and Mr. King is so significant that the public, as well as yourselves, should require that the site plan be changed. The whole thing that was workable. What they did was just sticking with what I call the site plan, the plan itself, whether or not you believe it to be a material change such that

the Applicant should come back. That's really the first question.

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There's a couple of other questions we have to deal with as well, but I prefer to deal with them one at a time.

The Board can ask for additional questions. This is more of poling that it is whether or not we're going to vote on it. It's more you can express your concerns and then we'll make a determination. So it's not a vote yet. So what are your thoughts and feelings.

Yes.

MR. SCHUMANN: My opinion and the way I look at it, it's a minor change and they've got go through the State with the DOT. If there are going to be any problems, they're going to shut it down or it would all have to come back as a change. That's my opinion of that particular question. I don't know how anybody else feels, but that's the way I look at it.

MR. NATALI; The reason why we're talking about this is because of an error that originated with a clerk in Upper Township?

MR. BATASTINI: No. That's a notice issue. We're not there. We're just talking about a change in the plan. And the plans that were originally in place have been changed.

And what you heard is two arguments, one is that the change is not material and the other one is that it is material. And if you determine that it's a material change, the next thing you have to determine is such that they should have to come back and that these plans should be available for everybody to look at.

MR. HAND: I'm going to use the phrase gray area to my question. I don't like posting my feeling with gray area, but here we are.

Is my understanding correct that if the Applicant goes ahead with the plan, if they go today with the driveway -- the entrance way is going to be reduced significantly.

MR. BATASTINI: That is what we heard, yes.

MR. HAND: And so there's that argument whether or not the State has to approve it or not. I think most of the people that are in opposition to this, first and foremost are saying it's a safety issue. So I think that's a -- it's not a very small detail. So I would just like to mention that.

MR. BATASTINI: That's all we're taking a look at. Do any other Board members have any comments?

MR. HAND: They're reducing from 40 to 20?

MR. BATASTINI: No. Why don't you tell us what you're doing?

UNIDENTIFIED: Can you swear him in so he can tell you?

MR. ORLANDO, APPLICANT'S EXPERT, SWORN

2.5

MR. BATASTINI: What the actual -- we're trying to figure out what the change is. In order for us to make pre-objective determination -- a hearing objection, we kind of need to know what the change is.

MR. ORLANDO: Just so you know, the driveway access has always been 20 feet wide. What we did was, in order to save some vegetation on the north side of adjacent trees, we reconfigured the driveway so that at the front it's 24 foot with two four foot radius for gradient for a total of 50 feet.

We can move the driveway on our property, on Lot 37, to make the change. And I believe that we will be able to have ingress and egress adequately on site using Lot 37. I haven't designed it yet. I think that's the issue. You know, if the Board wants to see that design change prior -- forward, can we proceed to day, knowing that we have to make that design change? I think that's the issue.

But the driveway width of 20 foot has always been the same. It hasn't changed from the last hearing.

MR. BATASTINI: Mr. King, would you like to say something?

MR. KING: Yes. So what we've learned, just learned, he hasn't designed what it is they're going to propose tonight?

2.5

I think we are entitled to notice at least 10 days in advance of what they propose. So that's why this is a draft. They're also moving the traffic closer to Lot 38. Lot 38 should have time to deal with that.

So that's why the access over the State highway is not a minor change and eliminating an entire lot from the application is not a minor change either.

(inaudible) that's not minor.

MR. CORRADO: Just so the record is clear, I agree with everything Mr. King just said. Additionally, it's going to require elimination of some of this buffer that exists (inaudible).

In any event I think what you heard Mr. Orlando say is in essence is that this is a material change. They have to re-design and the principal and sole access to this property off of the State highway.

I couldn't have said -- I've couldn't have made the case for material change better than Mr. Orlando just did.

MR. BATASTINI: So again, this is sort of an informal pole, right? I mean we haven't had the

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opportunity for the public to chime in. This is just
1
2
    more of where if this Board is in such conclusion that
3
    hey, this is a material change, then if you want to
    review the changes yourself, that's where we're at.
                                                          So
5
    I've heard from two Board members, but not the rest.
6
                     When will they contact DOT about
         MR. STILES:
7
    this? Shouldn't DOT have some say about the access?
8
                         They would. They absolutely
         MR. BATASTINI:
    would. And the DO -- the DOT doesn't have an open
9
10
    meeting like this.
                        So DOT is just going to sit there
    and they're look at -- they're going to look at the
11
12
    line, they're going to look at --
13
         MR. NATALI; They're going to say if it's safe.
14
         MR. BATASTINI: Yeah.
15
         MR. STILES: They're going to determine (not near
16
    microphone) across the street -- the street across,
17
    there's a traffic light there.
18
         UNIDENTIFIED: That's right.
19
         MR. STILES:
                     That adds the lighted match.
20
         MR. NATALI;
                     The last part?
21
         MR. STILES:
                     That adds the lighted match.
22
         MR. SCHUMANN: I just think the DOT is going to do
    what the most safest thing is. So that puts it back in
23
24
    your ballpark on the safety issue. If it's not safe,
2.5
    the DOT would say, no, you've got to do this.
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Personally, is what I think.

2.5

MR. STILES: I'm just wondering if the what the DOT would consider this. I'm just wondering should we even (inaudible) them before we know what their position is?

MR. HAND: I think a lot of this is a quality of life issue for the -- especially people that are against this topic, I think that it may be best to err on the side of caution, you know, to get it right.

MR. BATASTINI: Well the Applicant has advised that if permitted by the Board, that they would resubmit within a sufficient amount of time, without renotice, hold on, Mr. King and Mr. Corrado, we're not even at the notice issue yet.

So -- did I get that right. You want it done right?

MR. BELL: Yes, look, since everyone is concerned, we'll submit a new site plan and I'll have the access on Lot 37 and we'll come back, so there's no question as to what's going on. At that point, the entirety, everything will be on only one lot and that's Lot 37, which we've already noticed for, so it wouldn't require additional notice.

I think that's -- we're trying to be practical as I said.

MR. BATASTINI: So that takes care of the first issue, which is moving forward for today, we're not doing anything, but we still have the issue — addressing the issue about notice. And I don't think this — since the Board is not going to be doing anything today and with the permission of the Applicant and the opposition attorneys that we take some time, since this is relatively fresh for everybody, to make a determination and at least I can review the law on the case law in regards to this addition/subtraction of a lot. Whether or not that's going to require re-notice of everything.

2.5

I just don't know the law well enough. I'm not so sure anybody has really had time to even look at it.

There are certain sections within the Municipal Land

Use Law that deal with agricultural boards directly.

And I haven't heard any comment about those particular statutes that are actually in the Municipal Land Use

Law that deal with notice of the hearing.

MR. BELL: We can give notice again, certainly. It's not that big of a deal.

MR. BATASTINI: So then the next question is how far does this notice go back in terms of jurisdiction? So -- and, you know, again I'm not so sure that this Board or even I can make a determination as to whether

the original notice was sufficient or not and it may or may not make a difference, it may all be moot, because the plan has changed and we are now sticking with everything that's in now are going with Lot 37.

(Person speaking not near microphone)

MR. BATASTINI: I'm going to be very flexible on what you guys can speak about, because no matter what, this is getting on you. By my all means to my three professionals who are working closely, please understand the reasons I'm giving everybody such great advice.

MR. KING: Well, I appreciate that and I'll try to be brief. The original theory on this was on the plan that included Lot 36. So that theory had defective notice.

Moving Lot 36 after the fact doesn't go back in time and make that first hearing proper. Again, I turn to the concept of being prudent. What's the worst thing that happens? You haven't passed a resolution and we hear additional, which I believe to be helpful, information on the first issue. And if you don't change your mind, you don't change your mind.

But the worse thing that happens is you get to have a hearing on the issue with full and proper notice on a plan that's before everybody properly and if you

make the same ruling, you make the same ruling. I
think you might not, but the worst thing that happens
is you hear what we have to say and my professionals
and Mr. Corrado, the attorney for the Township and Ms.
Cubiello (phonetic), a professional planner for the
Township of Upper. And you hear information on the
first and second issue and make the best decision
possible.

2.5

You haven't passed a resolution. Contrary to what was said before, it's not two different applications, it's all one application submitted at once. You just happened to hear the first one and the second one to decided to carry the second one for another day. That doesn't make it two separate applications. It's all --it's all one application. And you haven't passed a resolution, so I think everything is game, but why not listen to everything and put do it right with proper notice? Thank you. That's all. Thank you for your (inaudible), Mr. Prosecutor.

MR. BATASTINI: Mr. Corrado, I assume you're going to agree with everything Mr. King said?

MR. CORRADO: Today, yes. Just today.

MR. BELL: Yeah, so just to be clear, what they're asking me to do is go back, determine the whole five acre issue again. That's -- that's what that argument

was because they thought you got it right the first time and they want a second bite at the apple.

Shouldn't do that, it's not required.

Again, our position is, and I believe that we're right, that we can proceed today. We're trying to be accommodating. They have these concerns, but there's a change of plan. Their concern about it is fine. We'll give -- we'll give notice again.

The only thing you certified as a commercial farm was Lot 37. You had notice last time for Lot 37. You can't certify Lot 36 as a commercial farm, it's not.

So the notice the first time, again I think it's fine for today, give notice to 200 feet of the commercial farm, this is the commercial farm.

So we're willing, and in an abundance of caution, as Mr. Batastini said, someone's going to -- someone's going to appeal this, right? We're willing to put that back out there. We're going to do notice again for Lot 37, so everybody has time. You know, maybe if they have problems with it, they'll let us know before an hour before the hearing next time around.

But that way everybody feels (inaudible). We shouldn't go back and re-do what we did the first time. Again the only way that we're here, the only way that you can consider an SSAMP is if you're a commercial

farm. And you've already determined that this is a commercial farm. We shouldn't have to repeat all that testimony and have a whole bunch more people come in here and tell you that you got it wrong the first time.

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And maybe that's something that we can't decide today. Maybe the parties have to bring Mr. Batastini again, I don't know exactly what the plan is. But for that you're sitting. You voted, you have minutes, you approved those minutes. In our mind that's a closed issue, because that is the jurisdictional door which gets us here for the SSAMP. Without a commercial farm, there is no SSAMP.

MR. BATASTINI: I don't know whether there's a notice issue as to whether or not it is improper or was properly done. I just don't have enough information before me in terms of the State statutes. And again this is (inaudible).

So what we can do is that when this is scheduled for the next hearing, I will have an opportunity to go back and forth with some of the attorneys and I can then give you my opinion would be as to whether or not this should be re-noticed in its entirety or not.

I will tell you that the notice provisions fall under two sections. There's the Right to Farm section and then there's the statute section on (inaudible) as

well.

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So it's sort of where -- the best that I can -- unless you want to take like a two hour break while I research this thing and get back to you and we'll just reconvene in two hours. I'm not sure that that is going to give me a sufficient amount of time, because there's an awful lot to digest.

Basically we're just pumping on the issue of notice and so I can get myself or one of the attorneys to do some legal research.

MR. NATALI; Right, but there would have to be another Board vote as to whether or not the Board approval was legitimate? Is that the idea?

MR. BATASTINI: No. I wouldn't be a Board -- yes, it would be of Board vote as to whether or not the proper notice was done or not. What I probably would suggest, and I'm talking out loud the more I think about it, it's probably not a great idea. But the Applicant may very well, you know, want to prepare to do both. I don't know how complicated that would be for them.

That's one way to look at it so we don't have to have an additional hearing to make a determination as to whether notice was defective or not.

MS. WHEELER: You're going to start from a

Schedule One though?

2.5

MR. BATASTINI: If this term determines, and I by no means making any kind of a suggestion that it is or it isn't, if the Board determines that jurisdiction was never provided to the Board, right? And that notice was required. You've heard argument from Mr. Bell that notice is required for the commercial farm. But if this Board determines something different, then yes, we start from scratch.

If the Board determines that notice, or that no notice is required, then of course this is after I, you know, give you the opinion as to what should -- I think the Court would say, then they have to start over again. I'm sorry, your original decision will hold.

MR. SCHUMANN: Just stay with our original decision is my personal opinion.

MR. BATASTINI: But we can't make that decision because I'm not in a position to tell you whether or not notice was proper or not. And I think that's critical. And here's why. It is critical for both parties, the Applicant and the objectors.

Because there's a couple of other things that you need to decide before we get to the SSAMP. And that is whether or not, after hearing the objectors and the objector's planner, whether or not you're going to send

a portion of this back to Upper Township for either a recommendation and/or approval. If you do decide to do that and then the Applicant goes through that whole process and then they come back here and they go through the process again for the SSAMP for you to decide yes or no and that gets appealed to the State.

2.5

MR. BELL:

Yes.

And then if the appeal to the State doesn't go in a particular manner, I believe that either the Applicant or the Objector can then appeal that. And if that gets appealed, you've got to go--

MR. BELL: The SSAMP Appellate Division is -MR. BATASTINI: So it skips the Superior Court.

MR. BATASTINI: So it goes to the State, skips the Superior Court, you go to the Appellate Division. And the Appellate Division, if someone doesn't like that one, then you go to the Supreme Court.

UNIDENTIFIED: You better (inaudible) let her go.

MR. BATASTINI: Well, no matter what, the reason I bring it up is one of jurisdiction. Right? That's the key here. Because if we send it -- if we go through that whole process and you get to the highest court that we have, which is the Supreme Court of New Jersey. And the Supreme Court of New Jersey says you don't have jurisdiction, you never had jurisdiction, we're re-

doing everything. Everything from day one.

2.5

So that's why this issue of jurisdiction is incredibly important and that's why I want to take the time to research it, because it could get to the Supreme Court, should it ever go that far, you're taking three to four years. And then to kick it back, just to have to start all over again, I don't think that's fair for either party.

So that's why I say we just give me some time to review what the Applicant and objectors get their information to (inaudible) and I'll take it and I will come back to this Board. And I think one of the things that we can discuss and I'm not so sure we need to do it right now, that is what is the next Board -- what is the task the Board is going to be asked next? One, just to have a meeting, talk about the jurisdictional issue. Because I really don't think it's fair for the Applicant and the opposition and all these people to have to come back just to hear us say yes, we're going to want the jurisdictional issue.

It's probably something that we can have a hearing for. Talk about the jurisdictional issue, make that decision. And then once we make that decision, then the Applicant can present the bulk of their work in terms of re-submitting and re-noticing. And then we

kind of move forward with that.

2.5

I see Mr. Bell shaking his head -- shaking his head in agreement, but the stoic nature of Mr. Corrado and Mr. King, that's something that's truly offensive to you. It's probably what I'm going to do anyway, unless you give me a better idea.

MR. BELL: Can you just say what it is because I missed it? What is the question?

MR. BATASTINI: So the question is what I think I would like to do for purposes of procedure moving forward, is to one, have -- you guys don't, you know, rightly have an opinion as to why you think the notice is good or bad for purposes of jurisdiction. At that point, I will do my own research based upon your submissions and my own and then pose the question to the Board first. Let the Board first determine whether or not there is a jurisdictional issue or not a jurisdictional issue.

And then thereafter, let everyone else follow foot in terms of what happens if, you know, if we decide to go back in history, then you're going to want to have your professionals come in and talk about the Commercial Farm aspect of it. If the Board determines this is not a jurisdictional issue and they're fine with what happened and then more of that, because

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there's already been a vote, it's the only thing we
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2
    have to deal with is that their decision may very well
3
    be that your appeal -- that's what I'm trying to
    accomplish.
5
         So I think the next meeting that we have is just
6
    based on jurisdiction.
                    (Person not on camera)
8
         MR. NATALI; The person who preached prudence for
    a half hour, I feel (inaudible-not near microphone).
9
10
    So taking the time to understanding the best way and
11
    also we have to see the plan that they have.
12
    think that is the correct way to do it.
13
         MR. CORRADO: Just to I understand, so that I'm
14
    clear, when you say -- when your talking about
15
    jurisdiction, what you're really talking about is
16
    whether we're going to re-litigate the commercial farm
17
    issue, correct?
18
                          That is correct.
         MR. BATASTINI:
19
         MR. CORRADO: My understanding is that Mr. Bell
20
    has already agreed that he's going to re-notice with
21
    respect to the --
22
         MR. BATASTINI:
                          SSAMP.
23
         MR. CORRADO: -- the amended plan.
24
         MR. BATASTINI: Correct.
2.5
         MR. CORRADO: So I'm okay.
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MR. BATASTINI: Board members, a lot of talking, but the final decision is yours, if that makes sense. Let us reconvene at a later date, so I can give you some really good legal research and opinion. We can make the determination as to the jurisdiction, whether it is -- whether we had it at all or not.

And again, there are other issues other than just notice. The other issue is whether or not you can go back on your own accord and re-open everything up. And I'm sure I'm going to hear from both the Applicant and the Objectors as to that issue as well is whether we really can do that. In courts we call it -- the Court wants to go in and we ask the Court to review what they've already reviewed and res judicata. You got it?

MR. CORRADO: I do.

2.5

MR. BATASTINI: All right. So what do you think?

MR. NATALI; Well, not to put too fine a point on

it, but everybody here on the Board and most of the

people here, you know, we're all volunteers. And we're

kind of like talking about a process where no matter

what's decided here, just on the jurisdictional

question, may go all the way to the Supreme Court of

New Jersey. But this just seems like a colossal waste

of everybody's time.

MR. BATASTINI: That's why we're going to try to

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partition it in such a section that we waste as little
1
2
    time as possible. So, please, you guys are --
3
         MR. NATALI; And that's the point, we didn't even
    get to the merits.
4
5
         MR. BATASTINI: One of these applications --
6
    either way we're coming back. That much we know.
         MR. SCHUMANN: I'll go with what the Board says,
8
    but I think we've already made the vote, in my opinion.
    Right?
9
10
         MR. BATASTINI:
                         We're going to -- we're going to
11
    -- we're going to discuss that after I have an
12
    opportunity to make sure you all have the law in front
13
    of you and my opinion. Instead of me making it up on
14
    the fly and something where my decision and the Board
15
    -- my opinion and the Board's decision could affect the
16
    application for years to come on a technicality, but
17
    that technicality is significant. It takes everything
18
    back to start all over. It's not fair to do that
19
    including the work.
20
         MR. NATALI; I agree with that.
21
         MR. HAND: Yeah, I agree with that. Do you need a
22
    vote on -- to go along with your suggestion?
23
         MR. BATASTINI: Yes.
24
         MR. STILES:
                      All in favor of going along with the
25
    suggestion of our attorney? Roll call?
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ROLL CALL: (Not near microphone)
1
2
         MS. ERNST:
                     Al?
 3
         MR. NATALI: Aye.
         MS. ERNST: James?
 4
5
         MR. HAND:
                   Yes.
         MS. ERNST:
 6
                     Matt?
         MR. STILES: Yes.
8
         MS. ERNST:
                    Sue?
         MS. WHEELER: Yes.
9
10
         MS. ERNST:
                     Bob?
11
         MR. SCHUMANN: Yeah.
12
         MR. BATASTINI:
                          Thank you. Board members, you've
13
    got a very difficult position and what you do, but you
14
    are so special and so important to the whole process
15
    and please don't lose site of that.
16
         And you're right, the amount of money they pay you
17
    to be here is ridiculous. And the aggravation, so
18
    please, this is what makes the system work.
19
         All of you, thank you for coming out. Thank you
20
    for expressing your concerns.
21
         We can actually -- any other material for the
22
    Board?
23
         UNIDENTIFIED: Motion to adjourn.
24
         UNIDENTIFIED:
                        All in favor?
25
                         (All ayes)
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                     (Session ends at 12:30:11 p.m.)
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                          CERTIFICATION
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               I, JENNIFER WILSON, the assigned transcriber,
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    do hereby certify the foregoing transcript of
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    proceedings of March 31, 2022, audio recorded, index
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    compressed transcript of the proceedings as recorded to
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    the best of my knowledge and ability.
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    /s/ Jennifer Wilson
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    JENNIFER WILSON, AD/T #623
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