

# CAPE MAY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Will Morey  
Commissioner

4 Moore Road  
Cape May Court House, N.J. 08210-1601  
(609) 465-1080 ☒ Fax: 465-1418  
planningbd@co.cape-may.nj.us



Leslie L. Gimeno, PP, AICP

Planning Director

*Established 1953*

## Cape May County Planning Board Minutes of the Special Joint Meeting August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022 1:00 pm Commissioners Meeting Room

The Planning Board held a special joint meeting with the County Agriculture Development Board for the purpose of having a public hearing on the draft Comprehensive Farmland Plan.

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by CADB Chairperson Matt Stiles; he subsequently read the public meeting notice for the CADB. Mr. Simone read the public hearing notice by the County Planning Board, indicating that they would be considering the Farmland Plan for adoption as an element of the County Comprehensive Plan at its meeting at 5 pm on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Following the flag salute, roll call was taken with the following members being present:

Member	Present	Absent
Mr. Ashman	X	
Mr. Bulakowski	X	
Mr. Church	X	
Commissioner Morey	X	
Mr. Simone	X	
Commissioner Director Thornton		X

### **CADB Members Present:**

Matt Stiles, Chair  
Jamie Hand  
Bob Schumann  
Al Natali

### **Others in Attendance:**

Leslie Gimeno, PP, AICP, County Planning Director  
Lauren Purdom, PP, AICP, Senior Planner  
Scott Mullen, Principal Planning Aide  
Elena Gable, PP, AICP – Heyer & Gruel

### **Presentation: Cape May County Comprehensive Farmland Plan**

Elena Gable introduced herself and provided an overview of the draft plan, which is set to replace the previous version which was adopted in 2008. She explained that having a current plan is a requirement of the State Agriculture Development Committee for participation in the cost-share for farmland preservation easements.

Ms. Gable reviewed each of the 8 sections of the plan as follows:

- County's Agricultural Land Base
- County's Agricultural Industry – Overview
- Land Use Planning Context
- County Farmland Preservation Program – Overview
- Future Farmland Preservation Program
- Agricultural Economic Development
- Natural Resource Conservation
- Agricultural Industry Sustainability, Retention, and Promotion

Mr. Natali (CADB) raised the issue of the data source (2017 Agricultural Census). Ms. Gable said that it was unfortunate that the 2022 data is not yet available. Consensus by CADB and CMCPB was reached to retain the services of Heyer & Gruel for an update of the plan once the 2022 data is released (likely 2023-24).

In response to a question from Mr. Ashman regarding the origin of grapes used in the production of CMC wines, Mr. Natali said that most are blends, but that Natali and Turdo Vineyards have the highest percentage of locally grown grapes.

The goals for obtaining easements on 100 acres per year was questioned by Mr. Natali. Mrs. Ernst said that there is no way to predict how many applications the program will receive, so all of the Q Farms in the County are considered targeted farms. She noted that a 300-acre farm (Bohm Sod Farm) had gone to closing in 2022.

Mr. Ashman inquired about the appraisal process used to determine the development easement value. Mrs. Ernst explained that the difference between the market value unrestricted at highest and best use and value restricted is the value. Mr. Ashman later asked about the SADC cost share and the value to the County, with Mrs. Ernst and Mr. Mullen indicating that the cost share was significant and the County had received hundreds of thousands of dollars in SADC funding over the course of the program.

Mr. Schumann made a motion to adopt the plan, as written – with the understanding that it will be updated when the 2022 Agriculture Census is released; Mr. Hand seconded the motion. All members of the CADB were in favor.

Ms. Gimeno said that the next step is for the County Planning Board to consider it for adoption as part of the County Comprehensive Plan. She indicated that this will take place on Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm and that per the County Planning Act, the appropriate public notices and copies of the document had been provided to the Municipal Clerk and Planning Board Secretaries of each of our 16 municipalities.

**Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**Adjournment:**

At 2:15, Mr. Natali made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Hand seconded the motion. All members of the CADB and CMCPB were in favor.