



AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

May 16, 2019

8:00PM

CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT

Cathy Blumig

Al Puchalek

Craig Feibel

Rik Johnson

Tara Kenyon, AICP/PP – Land Preservation and Management Consultant

PUBLIC COMMENT

(The meeting will be opened to the Public to provide time for comments and/or questions related to the agenda)

As there were no members of the public present, there were no public comments made.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Craig Feibel made a motion to approve the April 18, 2019 meeting minutes, which was seconded by Al Puchalek. All agreed, with the exception of Cathy Blumig who abstained, and the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Update from the State Agriculture Development Committee

Amy Mandlebaum and Cindy Roberts, staff at the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) attended the meeting to discuss potential farmland preservation projects in Franklin Township. The SADC Staff has recently been charged with attending frequent meetings of the County Agriculture Development Boards and Agriculture Advisory Committees to assess what type of assistance is needed, and to inform these Boards and Committees of new legislation, policies and programs.

Cathy Blumig recommended the allowance for preserving farms that are highly wooded area due to the increasing trends of woodland farming. Currently, wooded acres do not contribute to the qualifying acres for tillability, however more and more farmers are using these wooded areas for timber, mushrooms, and more.

A recommendation for education and outreach to professionals in the field of farmland preservation was made. These professionals include, but are not limited to, title officers, surveyors, appraisers, real estate agents, attorneys and planners.

The SADC Staff will attend another meeting of the AAC at the end of the year.

OLD BUSINESS

Franklin Township Municipal Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan

Tara Kenyon updated the Committee that the Plan will be on the August Planning Board agenda for approval. All comments submitted by the SADC have been addressed, all mapping data has been updated and the newest Census of Agriculture data (2017) has been used and included. .

Farmers Market

Tara Kenyon reported that as of right now there were eight (8) vendors confirmed for the Market season. Staff continues to reach out to potential vendors and community groups to attend the Market.

The Farmers Market will open on Saturday, June 1st and run every Saturday through September 21st from 10AM – 2PM at the Franklin Township Municipal Complex (field between Amwell Road and DeMott Lane). Themed days have been advertised (Back to School Day, Green Day, National Farmers Market Week, All About Moms/Dads, Wellness Fair, etc.). The free shuttle will continue to operate along the Hamilton Street Corridor.

The Market has successfully obtained two grants for this season:

1. Sustainable Jersey Capacity Building Grant (\$2,000) – this grant can be used for signage, promotional and marketing materials, and for the hiring of entertainment. Staff plans to use this grant to hire musicians for background music, additional signage and advertising materials, items for prizes at the Farmers Market Table and to partially fund the salary of the part-time Farmers Market Manager.
2. Garden State Good Foods Network (\$250 + materials) – this grant allows customers to “double their SNAP dollars”. Visitors using SNAP/EBT can double their dollars (up to \$10 per customer) by visiting the Farmers Market Table and completing simple paperwork. In addition to the grant funding, GSGFN provided the Franklin Township Community Farmers Market with marketing materials including tabletop signage, buttons, fliers in English and Spanish and social media templates.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Al Puchalek made a motion to open the public portion of the meeting, which was seconded by Craig Feibel. All agreed and the Committee entered Executive Session to discuss current and potential land negotiations.

Following the business addressed in Executive Session, Al Puchalek made a motion to close the public portion of the meeting, which was seconded by Craig Feibel. All agreed and the Committee entered back into the public session of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Rik Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Cathy Blumig. All agreed and the meeting closed at 10:15PM.