

Millstone Township Agricultural Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes
December 5, 2011

Mr. Asprocolas called the meeting to order at 7:41 pm.

The Secretary read the adequate notice.

Roll Call

Present: (4) Asprocolas, Halka, Peck, Pinhas

Absent: (2) Butch, Dancer

Approval of Minutes

A Motion was made by Mr. Peck with a Second offered by Mr. Asprocolas to approve the November 7, 2011, minutes.

Ayes: (2) Peck, Asprocolas

Nay: (0)

Correspondence: None.

Old Business

- **Large Animal OEM Plan:** Nothing new to report.
- **Low-hanging wires and tree branches:** Low hanging branches are still an issue but there is nothing new to report at this time.
- **Farm Leases:** The current three year farm lease on the Perrineville Road properties expires on 12/31/11. Council members were provided both the current version of the lease as well as a revised version which has been modeled after the Millstone Park farm lease. Points discussed include:
 - The current lessee has used irrigation and the lease value will be higher if irrigation is permitted. The Council's recommendation is to exclude item # 19 under Specifications/Requirements, which restricts irrigation.
 - The current lease specifies a 15 foot perimeter right-of-way; the Millstone Park lease specifies a 30 foot perimeter right-of-way for park planning purposes. The Council recommends leaving the current 15 foot perimeter right-of-way because the Perrineville Road properties are not part of a park development or recreation plan. Increasing the perimeter right-of-way will reduce the tillable acreage and in turn reduce the value of the lease.
 - All Township farm leases should follow the same basic guidelines.
 - Mr. Peck explained that there may be a Federal law regarding the time period farmers have to remove crops from leased fields.
- **Motor Vehicle Regulations for Agriculture:** Nothing new to report.

- **Horse Keeping Businesses and New Jersey Sales and Use Tax:** Nothing new to report.
- **Erosion resulting from farming practices and preventive measures:** Mr. Peck met with the Zoning Officer's assistant who informed Mr. Peck that Mr. Nurko has done everything the Township has requested and that the Township is not pursuing any zoning violations. Mr. Peck visited the property and noted that a cover crop has been planted, there are straw bales along the roadway and stone retention at the corner of the property. Mr. Peck explained that while the Right-to-Farm Act protects farmers who conform to agricultural management practices recommended by the State Agriculture Development Committee, it might not protect farmers from law suits for damages caused by farming operations. Mr. Peck noted that Doug Kauffman, NRCS Soil Conservationist, has a colleague who is very knowledgeable about the Right to Farm legislation and may be a good person to consult regarding protections for farmers under the Right to Farm Act.
- **Preliminary meeting schedule for 2012:** No changes to the preliminary schedule at this time.

New Business

- Mr. Asprocolas announced that the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture wrote a letter to the Monmouth County Park System in support of the proposed agriculture museum at the Thomas Baird Homestead.
- Ms. Butch provided the Secretary with information from the USDA Farm Service Agency regarding the Emergency Conservation Program which provides emergency funding and technical assistance for farmers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out water conservation measures during severe drought. The information was provided to Council members and has been posted to the Ag Council's website.
- The Secretary provided a draft of the Council's accomplishments for 2011. The final version will be forwarded to Council members prior to being submitted to the Township Committee.

Having no further business to discuss, a Motion was made by Ms. Pinhas with a Second offered by Ms. Halka to adjourn the meeting and by unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorraine Maher
Council Secretary