

# Millstone Township Agricultural Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes  
February 7, 2011

Mr. Asprocolas called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

The Secretary read the adequate notice.

## Roll Call

Present: (4) Asprocolas, Butch, Dancer, Peck

Absent: (2) Halka, Pinhas

## Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Peck with a second offered by Ms. Butch to approve the January 10, 2011, minutes. Roll call vote:

Ayes (3) Peck, Butch, Asprocolas

Nays (0)

**Correspondence:** There was no correspondence to discuss.

## Old Business

- **Large Animal OEM Plan:** Nothing new to report. Ms. Butch will be attending another workshop and will provide more information at the next meeting.
- **Motor Vehicle Regulations for Agriculture Seminar Review:** Council members agreed that the seminar was well received. Ms. Butch reported that she received good comments about the seminar at the February 2<sup>nd</sup> MCADB meeting.
- **Low-hanging wires and tree branches**
  - There are many more low hanging wires and branches due to the recent snowstorms. Council members will report low hanging wires and branches to the Secretary, who will maintain a list.
  - The Secretary will speak to the Administrator to determine if DPW employees are able to take note of low hanging wires/branches as they drive through town.
  - The Department of Utilities determines who the wires belong to.
- **Farm Leases**
  - The engineering inspector will mark out the 30 foot buffer area around the leased farmland at Millstone Park. The lessee will mow and maintain the buffer area which is necessary for park planning purposes and will become a trail in the future.
  - Mr. Infante has reported that geese have caused significant damage to the crop planted at the leased farmland at Millstone Park. Ms. Butch explained that this is a stewardship issue and provided information obtained from the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding measures that can be taken to control the problem. Ms. Butch further explained the process for applying for a depredation permit. Geese are also a problem

at the Brandywine Soccer Complex and are causing a public health and safety hazard. One depredation permit application will be submitted to control the geese population at both Millstone Park and Brandywine Soccer Complex. Specific hunters must be named to obtain the permit. Hunters must be licensed with a valid firearm ID card.

- The municipal lease on the Perrineville Road farmland will expire on 12/31/11.

### **New Business**

- **Sunday and holiday travel restriction:** Ms. Butch worked with Karen Kritz to compose a letter to Secretary Fisher asking that he contact the Chief Administrator of the NJ Motor Vehicle Commission to request the removal of the Sunday and holiday travel restriction on farm machinery and equipment. Council members reviewed the letter and agreed to send the letter as written. The travel restriction is a "rule" and therefore does not need to go the legislature. This rule negates Millstone's Right to Farm Ordinance which states that farming activity may occur on Sundays and holidays.
- **Agriculture License:** The agriculture license is a "law" and can only be changed through legislation. A bill has been introduced to exempt agriculture licenses from certain graduate driver law restrictions. Mr. Asprocolas questioned criteria for the agriculture license including whether the 6 hour behind-the-wheel training is required for the junior license and if so, does the training need to be with an accredited school and does the training need to be done in a vehicle with "farm" plates. The ag license will be discussed at the State Ag Convention. Mr. Asprocolas will be attending the convention and inquire about the criteria. A decision regarding sending a letter to Secretary Fisher will be determined after the Ag Convention.
- **New 501c3 for Historic Properties/Agriculture Museum:** Ms. Butch announced that Mr. Dancer has agreed to serve as a Trustee on the new 501c3 organization. The Historic Commission, in conjunction with the new 501(c)(3), is looking to have an antique car show in about one year's time.
- **2010 Ag Council Accomplishments:** The Council reviewed the list of accomplishments. Items to add include the reports from the Vegetable Grower's Conference and State Ag Convention and the Motor Vehicle Regulations for Agriculture seminar planning. When the list of accomplishments is updated, it will be forwarded to the Mayor and Township Committee.
- **Farm Market:** Marion Healy, one of the farm market vendors, was in attendance. Ms. Healy explained that she has been a farm market vendor since the inception of the market in 2008 and asked if the market would be open for the 2011 season. Ms. Healy offered to solicit vendors and explained that she believes there are misconceptions about the process and requirements for becoming a vendor. Ms. Healy asked several questions which the Council addressed as follows:
  - **Vendor Fee:** Ms. Healy asked if the vendor fee is flexible. The current vendor fee is set at \$15.00/week by Ordinance. If enough vendors participate, it might be possible to reduce the fee. An Ordinance to

change the fee would need to be adopted by the Township Committee. The item would need to be placed on the TC meeting agenda followed by 2 readings prior to adoption.

- Market Manager: Ms. Healy asked if it is necessary to employ a market manager and if the market could be "self-policed" or if the manager could be a volunteer. Council members explained that the market manager position is necessary and while the position could be staffed by one or more volunteers, the person(s) would need to be approved by the Township Committee.
- Participating Vendors: Ms. Healy asked if participating vendors must be residents of Millstone and what types of items are permitted to be sold at the market. Ms. Butch explained that Millstone farmers are given preference as vendors and the Council would consider non-residents provided they are not in competition with resident vendors. Mr. Asprocolas clarified that the farm market is not a flea market and only the sale of agricultural products is permitted.
- Market Rules and Regulations: Ms. Healy asked if the Council would consider changing the market rules to permit the sale of prepared foods. The Secretary explained that the farm market falls under the jurisdiction of the Monmouth County Board of Health. Mr. Peck explained that the law specifies that any processed agricultural commodity must be prepared in an approved commercial kitchen and further explained that the county health department does not permit the sale of cut produce, such as half a watermelon, unless a set of on-site requirements is met. Mr. Asprocolas explained that this law is enforced and the Ag Council cannot change the health department guidelines.

Mr. Asprocolas and Mr. Peck explained that the farm market was not economically feasible for large growers and that the turnout of customers was very poor for a Saturday market. Mr. Asprocolas told Ms. Healy that the Council would consider sponsoring the market in 2011 if she could provide a list of enough vendors committed to taking part in the market. Mr. Asprocolas clarified that these must be firm commitments, not people who "might" consider participating. Council members confirmed that they want the farm market to succeed but there must be a need and desire for the market demonstrated by the community. Ms. Healy agreed to attend the March 7<sup>th</sup> Ag Council meeting and will provide a list of committed farm market vendors.

Having no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Peck with a second offered by Ms. Butch to adjourn the meeting and by unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorraine Maher